

# BRIEFLY

**Kim Young-Sam pardons 3,000:** South Korean President Kim Young-Sam Friday granted a special mass amnesty affecting more than 3,000 people to mark the peninsula's liberation from Japanese colonial rule, a top official said. AFP reports from Seoul.

Kim granted clemency to a total of 3,169 ex-convicts and "exemplary" prisoners who fully repented their crimes "to foster national harmony." Justice Minister Ahn Woo-Mahn said.

**Taliban free 7 Russian crews:** The seven crew members of a Russian cargo plane held by Afghan militants since the plane was found to be carrying military supplies have been freed, Russian radio reported Friday. AFP says from Moscow.

The Taliban rebel group freed the crew and its plane, an Ilyushin 76 belonging to the Russian Aerostan Company, said Echo Moscow radio, quoting the Afghan embassy in Moscow. An embassy spokesman told AFP that it had heard unofficial reports to that effect, but could not confirm them.

**Silajdzic to remain as PM:** Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic withdrew his resignation Thursday at the request of President Alija Izetbegovic, an aide to Silajdzic said. AFP reports from Sarajevo.

Silajdzic withdrew his resignation following conversations with the Bosnian president in the course of official meetings Thursday. Bosnian television reported.

**Blast kills 7 in Algiers:** A bomb attack on a train south of the Algerian capital killed seven people and wounded 20, an Algerian newspaper said on Thursday. Reuters reports from Paris.

The bomb went off in a train carriage on Tuesday near Medea, some 70 km (43 miles) south of Algiers, El-Watan Daily reported.

**Sino-Indian talks next week:** China and India will conduct an eighth round of talks August 18 and 19 in an effort to resolve their long-standing border dispute, the official Xinhua news agency reported. AFP reports from Beijing.

The talks in New Delhi will focus on how a border peace accord signed by the two sides in 1993 should be applied, the report said.

**Flood claims 8 in Rajasthan:** Eight people have died and tens of thousands have lost their homes in flooding caused by heavy monsoon rains in the Indian desert state of Rajasthan, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported Friday. AFP says from New Delhi.

Four people were killed in the town of Dausa on Thursday when their house collapsed on top of them, the news agency said. Two deaths were reported from the town of Bharatpur and two from Alwar, it said.

**50 feared drowned in Patna:** Nearly fifty persons, mostly women and children, were feared drowned when a country boat capsized in the swollen river Ganga near Bakhtiarpur in Patna district Wednesday, according to official reports reaching Patna on Thursday. PTI reports from Patna, Bihar.

Six bodies have so far been fished out while efforts to trace the remaining bodies were continuing, the district room in Patna said.

**Iranian newsmen blast UN role:** About 300 Iranian journalists Thursday blasted the United Nations' "impotent and biased" role in the Bosnian conflict, accusing it of failing to live up to its legal and moral responsibilities. AFP reports from Tehran.

In a petition published in Iranian newspapers, the journalists criticised the "lax" UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, saying his hands were "smeared by the blood of innocent Bosnians."

**6 escape from Surat jail:** Six under-trials escaped from the sub-jail in Bardoli of Surat district in Gujarat Thursday. PTI reports from Ahmedabad.

The under-trials broke open the bars of a window in the bathroom of the sub-jail and escaped, police said. An offence has been registered against the accused at Bardoli Police Station.

**Kurds on hunger strike in Turkey:** Around 15,000 prisoners and members of their families mainly Kurds were still on hunger strike in Turkish prisons after nearly a month a human rights campaigner said in Geneva Thursday. AFP reports from Geneva.

Etienne Jaudel of the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH) gave details of the mass hunger strikes during a press conference at the UN's Palais des Nations in Geneva after returning from a six-day trip to Turkey to review prisoners welfare.

## China - Philippines accord over Spratlys

MANILA, Aug 11: The Philippines and China have reached agreement on a "code of conduct" to reduce the chances of a military conflict over the disputed Spratly Island, a senior Filipino official said Tuesday, reports Reuters.

But they remained far apart over a row that erupted last February when Manila discovered that Beijing had built structures over mischief reef in a part of the Spratlys claimed by Manila, Philippine Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Rodolfo Severino told reporters.

"We agreed that such a code of conduct would be necessary," Severino said in a briefing after two days of talks with a Chinese delegation headed by Assistant Foreign Minister Wang Yingfan.

"Eventually, we hope all countries concerned would get on board," he said, adding that the code would govern the behaviour of Chinese and Filipino military forces in the Spratlys.

Differences between the two nations over dismantling Chinese structures built on mischief reef were not resolved.

"They know the basis of our concern. We want the situation to be restored," Severino said, referring to when no Chinese structures existed on mischief reef.

The potentially oil-rich cluster of reefs are also claimed in whole or in part by Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan.

Adl also said that 600 Palestinians living in Libya had been repatriated to the autonomous Gaza Strip via Egypt over the same period.

Police in Salum said earlier that Tripoli has begun repatriating 40,000 Palestinian refugees.

Tens of thousands of them

## Israel, PLO reach accord over expansion of self-rule

TABA, Egypt, Aug 11: Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) early today announced they had reached an accord removing some of the principal obstacles to the expansion of Palestinian self-rule on the West Bank, reports AFP.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and PLO chairman Yasser Arafat told a press conference in this Red Sea resort at the end of four days of talks that the document they agreed on would enable their working delegations to hammer out a full accord on self-rule.

Peres said seven areas of conflict had been resolved: "Rural zones on the West Bank, the second phase of Israeli military redeployment, release of Palestinian prisoners, taxation, economic development, amending the Palestinian national charter and the city of Hebron."

On the future of Hebron, where Israel wants its forces to remain to protect Jewish settlers surrounded by 120,000 Palestinians, Peres

explained: "We discussed it but we did not have enough time to achieve" an agreement.

But he said the matter would be taken up by a special joint committee.

"Hebron is a very important city for us," declared Arafat. "We are interested in the security of the settlers and we will cooperate on this issue."

On the Palestinian charter, which calls for the destruction of Israel, the text will be amended by Palestinian leaders soon after a final accord on expanding autonomy is signed, according to Peres.

Two months after the signature of the accord, the necessary amendments to the Palestinian national charter will be made," he said, as Arafat nodded his approval.

The Israeli minister also disclosed that he and Arafat had discussed the question of West Bank economic development by telephone with US Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

He said it had been agreed that Israel, the United States and PLO would form a tripartite committee to promote economic growth.

Peres said the document worked out here had been signed for Israel by Uri Savir, a senior foreign ministry official, and for the PLO by Ahmad Korei, the Palestinian "minister" of the economy.

For the past several weeks Savir and Korei and their delegations have been debating plans to expand Palestinian self-rule. But their talks, held in the nearby Israeli resort of Eilat, had foundered on several key questions, prompting the intervention here this week of Peres and Arafat.

"After very historical, important and difficult days we have achieved something very concrete and positive for the second state of autonomy," Arafat said.

"We hope we can continue in this way to reach a full agreement. There are still points to be discussed in subcommittees," added

Peres. "We did not complete our work but through it we moved aside some very heavy obstacles."

Talks at expert level are to resume Sunday, with Arafat and Peres meeting again at the end of next week, according to Peres, who said the document approved here would be released to the public after having been presented to the Israeli cabinet on Sunday.

The Taba talks were designed to speed the implementation of the second stage of Palestinian autonomy, which would cover an Israeli military redeployment on the West Bank, the transfer of civil powers and elections to a Palestinian self-governing council.

In an earlier phase, under terms of an Israeli-PLO declaration of principles signed in Washington in 1993, the Palestinians achieved autonomy on the Gaza Strip and in one West Bank town, Jericho.

Gaza and the West Bank were captured by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war.

## NZ welcomes French decision to accept total N-test ban treaty

WELLINGTON, Aug 11: The New Zealand government today cautiously welcomed reports that France will accept a total nuclear test ban in treaty negotiations next year, reports AFP.

Foreign Affairs Minister Don McKinnon said the indication of France's willingness to accept a zero-sum threshold making the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) truly comprehensive was welcomed.

France's ambassador to the Geneva disarmament conference, Gerard Errera, said Paris would put up a proposal ensuring the CTBT "prohibit any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion" including low-yield blasts.

France had earlier reserved the right to continue small-scale tests indefinitely.

Through a spokeswoman, McKinnon said the ambassador's statement was "a welcome step in the right

direction."

"The French have also stated however, that they want to be able to carry out activities to maintain stockpile safety and reliability and we've yet to cock what this will involve."

"We await clarification of

**Kidney transplant patients have risk of cancer**

LONDON, Aug 11: Kidney transplant patients have a high risk of developing cancer that increases with time, British researchers said today, reports Reuters.

After studying 918 patients, Peter Lodge and colleagues from St James's University Hospital in Leeds, northern England, found that 70 patients, or 7.6 per cent, developed a tumour after the operation and 10 patients had more than one type of tumour.

what this means.

An earlier report of Reuters from Canberra says, France will commit itself to a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) prohibiting all nuclear tests after next May and will close its French Polynesian test site, a French official said yesterday.

France would make an announcement on the issue in Geneva this week, Yves Detricieux of the French Foreign Ministry said in a radio debate carried by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

Detricieux's debate with Australia's ambassador in the United States, Don Russell, was originally broadcast on a Chicago radio station on Wednesday.

"On the definition of the tests for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty I can tell you that tomorrow we will be announcing in Geneva a position which will be exactly the Australian position," Detricieux said.

## France rejects US study on arms sale

PARIS, Aug 11: France on Thursday rejected a US study showing it had overtaken the United States as the largest arms supplier to Third World nations, saying the report wrongly included sales to rich Gulf states, reports Reuters.

Defence Minister Charles Millon also said that Wednesday's publication of the government study, by the Congressional Research Service, seemed aimed at galvanising the US arms industry to make a greater effort.

The report said that the value of French sales agreements shot to 11.4 billion dollars in 1994 from 3.8 billion dollar in 1993.

At the same time, US arms sale pacts with developing nations plunged to their lowest level in real terms in eight years to 6.1 billion dollars from 15.4 billion dollars in 1993.

## UN to airlift food aid for Serb refugees

ZAGREB, Aug 11: The United Nations will airlift emergency food aid to Belgrade for Serb refugees fleeing Croatia after Croat forces overran their rebel enclave in the last week, UN spokesman Kris Janowski said today, reports Reuters.

The whole refugee problem is slowly shifting to Serbia at the moment," the High Commissioner for Refugees spokesman said.

"The flow of refugees coming out through Croatia appears to be drying up."

Janowski said a UNHCR Ilyushin cargo freighter would make its first flight from Ancona in Italy to Belgrade today carrying 40 tonnes of mixed food.

"There will be three more flights tomorrow and three more on Sunday," he added.

Janowski said the mini-airlift would be the first time humanitarian aid was moved into Serbia by air rather than land convoy, the UNHCR's Ancona-based food airlift to Sarajevo has been grounded since last April.

The international committee of the Red Cross flew an aid plane into Belgrade on Wednesday, hoping to fly it on to Banja Luka in Serb-held Bosnia. But technical problems have blocked their Antonov cargo jet from flying further, the ICRC said.

The United Nations said today it had no further reports of stoning of Serb refugees by angry crowds of Croats.



Bosnian government troops of the 5th corps in Bihac jump from a truck Thursday as six shells reportedly slammed overnight into the UN declared safe area.

## Off the Record



A woman ties 'rakhi' on the wrist of Congress Party MP and former film star Sunil Dutt on Thursday, the day of the Hindu festival of Raksha Bandhan, when sisters tie a coloured thread (rakhi) on the wrist of their brothers, forging a bond of love and seeking protection.

— AFP/UNB photo

## 'Do as I say not as I do'

WASHINGTON: Do as I say not as I do was the message President Bill Clinton sent to children Thursday when he announced a crackdown on cigarette sales to minors, but sidestepped a call to give up his cigars, reports AFP.

I smoke a handful a year, probably and I probably shouldn't and I try not to do it in any way that sets a bad example, but I plead guilty to that the President told a news conference.

Asked point blank whether he would pleaded on the spot to quit, Clinton was all smoke.

Well, you mean should I go from five or six down to zero a year, maybe so but I don't think that's the point, Clinton said. He pleaded that cigars and cigarettes were not targeted by the new federal administration rules.

I try to set an example I try never to do it where people seem said Clinton adding that he should probably give up altogether because he was allergic to cigars.

But I don't think that you should let that become the issue, he said.

The issue is whether the children are smoking cigarettes in this country.

## Poor stewardess

CORDOBA, Argentina: A stewardess was sucked out of a plane in mid-flight Wednesday when she tried to shut a door that abruptly opened shortly after take-off, police said, reports AFP.

The accident aboard an inter-Australia flight occurred 15 minutes after the plane left this Andean town en route for the city of Mendoza, in western Argentina.

Passengers said the 26-year-old flight attendant tried to close the door when she was pulled out of the aircraft.

The plane turned back and landed at Cordoba, and no passengers or other members of the crew were hurt.

Police and mountain rescue teams were combing the mountainous area for the body of the woman.

## Fergie, Andrew together again

LONDON: Britain's Prince Andrew and his estranged wife Sarah have gone on holiday together for the first time since their separation, sparking hopes for a permanent reconciliation, a newspaper reported Friday, reports Reuters.

The Daily Mail said the couple set off on Thursday for an exclusive villa in southern Spain with their two daughters, Louise and Beatrice, for their first family holiday since the formal separation was announced more than three years ago.

"Friends hope the six-day break ... marks the start of a permanent reconciliation," said the paper.

Sarah, popularly known as "Fergie" from her maiden name Ferguson, currently lives with her daughters in a rented house, while Andrew remains at a nearby mansion that was given to the couple as a wedding gift by Queen Elizabeth.

Unlike Andrew's older brother Prince Charles and his estranged wife Diana — who seem distinctly uncomfortable in each other's presence — Andrew and Sarah remain on good terms and have been spotted together on many occasions.

The Mail said they were seen together at a golf tournament this week, kissing, cuddling and laughing.

"It is no secret that Andrew has already done as much as he can to bring his wife back to him, including, according to some reports, going down on his knees and pleading," said the Mail.

## Libya expels 2,500 Egyptians

SALUM, Egyptian-Libyan Border, Aug 11: Libya expelled 2,500 Egyptians on Wednesday and Thursday, the customs chief at this border post said Thursday, reports AFP.

None of the expelled Egyptians who crossed the Salum border post had any identity documents on them," Mohammad Al-Adl told reporters.

Adl also said that 600 Palestinians living in Libya had been repatriated to the autonomous Gaza Strip via Egypt over the same period.

Police in Salum said earlier that Tripoli has begun repatriating 40,000 Palestinian refugees.

Tens of thousands of them

## US, Russia trying to revive peace process in ex-Y'slavia

ZAGREB, Aug 11: The UN Security Council on Thursday warned Croatia to abide by international human rights standards as Serbs streamed out of Croatia and the United States and Russia raced abreast to revive the peace process, reports Reuters.

The resolution on Croatia said Zagreb should stop the war immediately and respect the rights of local Serbs to remain, leave or return to their homes in safety.

The Croatian army crushed the rebel Serbs' three-year rebellion in a lightning offensive last week, prompting more than 150,000 Serbs to flee from their ancestral homes.

Tens of thousands of them

are still stranded in Croatia.

Distraught refugees appealed for protection after running a gauntlet of stones hurled by Croat mob near the town of Sisak.

"Hundreds of refugees ... were attacked by mob. Their vehicles were stoned, cars were destroyed and people were pulled out of vehicles and beaten up," UN spokesman Chris Gunness said.

Smashed car windows and bloody head wounds were a common sight when convoys of refugees neared the border crossing and safety in Serbia.

The Council, in its first debate since the Croatian offensive late last week, condemned the shelling of civilian targets as well as the

shooting of UN peacekeepers.

Croatia defended its action while Yugoslavia, which refrained from military support to Krajina brethren, castigated the Council for not taking firmer steps against Zagreb.

President Boris Yeltsin suggested the leaders of Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia meet to lay the groundwork for a conference of "leading nations" to seek an end to the fighting that has dogged the region since Yugoslavia fragmented in 1991.

But his summit call carried a sting in the tail. He said Russia might unilaterally abandon UN sanctions imposed on the rump Yugoslav

via, dominated by the republic of Serbia.

"It is time to relieve Yugoslavia of the burden of sanctions," he said after meeting Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic. "Further delays in solving this issue could trigger unilateral action (by Russia) to leave the sanctions regime."

Yeltsin praised the restraint of Serbia, a traditional Russian ally, which refused to help its Krajina brethren.

"There should be a political, not a military solution. There simply cannot be a military solution," Milosevic said.

President Bill Clinton, also trying to relaunch peace efforts, sent his national se-

curity adviser, Anthony Lake, to London, Bonn and Paris to test ground for a new initiative.

Clinton said developments in the Balkan conflict had created "a moment of real promise" for renewed peace efforts.

After meeting Lake, British officials said they were extremely positive about Washington's plan to revive the peace process. "We're going to support it," one said.

British officials declined to reveal any details of the ideas but diplomats said Washington appeared to be ready to agree to an easing of international sanctions against Serbia in return for

## 100 Kashmiri rebels held

SRINAGAR, India, Aug 11: Indian troops have arrested at least 100 suspected Kashmiri Muslim separatists in a crackdown launched ahead of next week's independence day celebrations, police said today, reports AFP.

Hundreds of paramilitary troops in battle fatigues have been carrying out house-to-house searches in this Kashmir summer capital for Muslim guerrillas who have threatened to disrupt Tuesday's independence day celebrations.

Police said at least 100 suspected Kashmiri Muslim separatists have been taken into custody this week while others were released after questioning.