

# BRIEFLY



A Bosnian policeman climbs through the unstable debris of an apartment building, searching for victims after intense Serbian shelling totally destroyed the structure in the centre of the Bosnian capital on Tuesday. At least six people were killed and 22 wounded by Serbian artillery during the Tuesday afternoon.

**Russian guards kill 1 Chinese:** Russian border guards shot to death a Chinese man they said illegally crossed the frontier from China, a news agency said Wednesday. AP reports from Vladivostok.

**Quake shakes Japanese islands:** An earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 6.8 shook southern Japanese islands Wednesday, the Meteorological Agency said. AP reports from Tokyo.

**Lee to seek second term:** Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui announced yesterday that he would seek a second term of office by taking part in the country's first-ever presidential race to be decided by popular vote. AFP reports from Taipei.

**Israel to extend closure in West Bank:** The Israeli army said on Tuesday it was extending a closure on the still-occupied West Bank, imposed a day earlier after five people were killed in a suicide bus blast in Jerusalem. Reuter reports from Jerusalem.

**URNG to observe ceasefire:** Leftist guerrillas of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unit (URNG) said here on Tuesday that they would observe a ceasefire for the last two weeks of Guatemala's election process November 1-13. Reuter reports from Panama City.

**Che's eldest daughter Gadea dies:** Hilda Guevara Gadea, the eldest daughter of Argentine revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara, has died of cancer at age 39 and was buried in Havana's Colon Cemetery on Tuesday, the Cuban news agency Prensa Latina said. Reuter reports from Havana.

**Hezbollah rebels kill 2 Israelis:** Hezbollah guerrillas Tuesday killed two Israeli backed militiamen in a roadside bomb attack in Israeli-occupied southern Lebanon the South Lebanon Army (SLA) said, AFP reports from Lebanon.

**US welcomes Liberia's peace accord:** The United States welcomed Tuesday a peace accord aimed at ending Liberia's six-year-old civil war and urged warring factions to implement it as soon as possible, AFP reports from Monrovia.

**Israeli jets hit Lebanese posts:** Israeli fighter jets rocketed guerrilla targets in south Lebanon Tuesday, pro-Israeli militia sources said, Reuter reports from Marjayoun, Lebanon.

**Smuggled goods seized in China:** Customs authorities have seized smuggled goods worth a record 4.65 billion yuan (560 million dollars) in the first seven months of this year, a report said Wednesday, AP reports from Beijing.

**Bush plans to visit China in Sept:** Former President George Bush plans to travel to China next month even as some fellow Republicans are opposing a possible visit there by Hillary Rodham Clinton because of human rights conditions in China, AP reports from Washington.

**Rio's largest cathedral robbed:** Ten masked gunmen broke into Rio's largest Roman Catholic cathedral and made off with 65,000 dollars in charity money kept in a basement safe, police said Tuesday, AP reports from Rio De Janeiro.

**Fire ruins Lankan govt building:** Fire swept through a six storey government building in downtown Colombo Wednesday, but no one was hurt, fire department officials said, AP reports from Colombo.

**Amethi tour fuels speculation of Gandhis' comeback in politics:** Amethi organised by the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation which she heads but with parliamentary elections due in early 1996, the visit is widely seen as a political tester.

## Aliza asks Russia to remain involved in peace talks Sarajevo won't give up Gorazde

SARAJEVO, Aug 23: Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic insisted Tuesday that Sarajevo would not give up Gorazde and asked Russia to remain involved in talks to bring peace to this Balkan nation, reports AFP.

The official Bosnia-Herzegovina press reported that Izetbegovic met here Tuesday with Alexander Zotov, the Russian envoy to the "contact group" made up of Britain, France, Germany, Russia and the United States.

He also reiterated that Bosnia would not swap the eastern enclave of Gorazde for Serb-held territory, as has been reportedly proposed in a UN peace initiative. UN peacekeepers in the Serb-surrounded town are expected to be out by the end of the month, leaving it vulnerable to a Bosnian Serb takeover.

French gunners, part of the international Rapid Reaction Force based outside the capital Sarajevo, fired six 155 mm rounds at a rebel position late Tuesday, said UN spokeswoman Myriam Sochacki.

### 40m to be infected with AIDS by 2000: WHO

MANILA, Aug 23: Up to 40 million people will be infected with the deadly AIDS virus by 2000, 90 per cent of them in developing countries, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said today, reports AFP.

The Manila-based WHO regional office for the Western Pacific said this represents a 105 per cent jump from the 18 million adults and 1.5 million children now infected with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

### Six killed as Tigers, troops clash

COLOMBO, Aug 23: At least six people were killed, including three Tamil guerrillas, in three separate incidents in Sri Lanka's ethnic civil war, the military said Wednesday, reports AP.

Two soldiers and a rebel died in a fire-fight between rebels and a military patrol Tuesday at Pandittirippu in Jaffna Peninsula, said Maj T A R Dunuwille, a military spokesman.

Three soldiers were wounded and six wounded rebels were taken away by their comrades after the battle, which occurred 310 kilometres (190 miles) north of Colombo, said Dunuwille.

### Ukraine won't close Chernobyl N-power station

LONDON, Aug 23: Ukraine will not shut down the Chernobyl nuclear power station until social welfare guarantees are provided for employees and the problem of storing 2,000 tonnes of nuclear has been resolved, Ukrainian Prime Minister Yevgeny Marchuk said Tuesday, reports AFP.

The Interfax News Agency, in a dispatch monitored here by the BBC, quoted Marchuk as telling directors of several major industrial companies in the eastern city of Kharkov that closing Chernobyl — site of the world's worst nuclear power accident in 1986 — and building replacement power plants would cost at least four billion dollars.



Chechen chief of staff Aslan Maskhadov (R) covers his face as Russian general Yevgeny Skobelev looks on, as they discuss the recent clashes in the Chechen town of Argun Monday.

## Baghdad not hiding anything about its arsenal

AMMAN, Aug 23: An Iraqi defector who had promised to expose Baghdad's military secrets told the UN's chief arms inspector that Iraq isn't hiding anything about its arsenal, a fellow defector said, reports AP.

Lt Gen Hussein Kamel, who used to head Iraq's secret weapons programmes before he defected to Jordan on August 8, had no surprises for UN inspector Rolf Ekeus, said Izzeddine Hessian al-Majid, who attended the meeting.

Izzeddine, a former Iraqi army officer, is al-Majid's cousin.

"Lt Gen al-Majid discussed with the UN official the Iraqi arms industry," Izzeddine said Tuesday. "But all the se-

crets were revealed by Baghdad" — not by al-Majid.

Al-Majid, who has established himself as an Iraqi opposition leader since his defection, had promised to expose Iraqi military secrets, but only if he felt it was "in the interest of Iraq."

Ekeus is in charge of eliminating Iraqi weapons of mass destruction to comply with the terms of a UN ceasefire that ended the 1991 Gulf War. If the Iraqis comply, UN sanctions would be lifted.

On Monday, Ekeus said Baghdad was handing over information it had with held before the defections.

Izzeddine said Tuesday that Ekeus planned to return to Baghdad.

The Iraqi regime has asked Ekeus to return to be given more information," he said. "That will not be now, but in a short while." He did not elaborate.

Meanwhile, a top US diplomat met Jordan's King Hussein, reportedly to try to persuade him to import oil from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait instead of Iraq.

It was the second visit to Jordan in four days for Robert Pelletreau, assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs.

Neither Jordanian nor US officials would confirm a Washington Post report that Pelletreau was trying to get Hussein to switch oil suppliers. Hussein denied the report.



Radicals from the majority Sinhala community protest at a public rally on Tuesday against the government's peace plan to end years of ethnic violence. The plan envisages the creation of eight autonomous regions that would offer greater devolution of power to minority Tamils.

## 'Sino-US relations at the lowest ebb'

BEIJING, Aug 23: With Sino-US relations at their lowest ebb since diplomatic ties were established, Americans with an "anti-China mentality" should change their thinking in order to avoid Cold War II, China's state news agency said today, reports AFP.

"We would like to advise those Americans with an anti-China mentality to give up their anachronistic way of thinking and hegemonic psychology so that Cold War II can be avoided," the Xinhua news agency said in a commentary.

Sino-US relations "are at their lowest ebb since the two countries established diplomatic ties 16 years ago," the Xinhua commentary said. Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui's visit to the United States in June and "attacks on China by columnists, scholars and critics in influential US newspapers and magazi-

nes "can not but put people on alert," the commentary said.

The attacks, said Xinhua, characterised China as the "new evil empire," and "a temperamental emerging superpower" with "belligerent behaviour," and said that "there is no more important strategic challenge for the 21st century than how to handle the rise of China."

"China does not and will never constitute a threat to the security of its neighbouring countries, still less to the United States fear out on the other side of the Pacific," the commentary said.

## Off the Record

### Wrong moment to smooch

BONN: A German woman who kissed her boyfriend while he was driving was fined 827.50 marks (800 dollars) Tuesday for causing a traffic accident as a result, reports AFP.

A judge in the western town of Ibbendueren ruled that the star-crossed Romeo lost control of his car as a result of the smooch and collided with another vehicle.

### Queen's austerity

LONDON: Britain's Queen Elizabeth will save taxpayer's money by using a commercial flight for the first time when she visits New Zealand later this year, The Daily Mirror reported Wednesday, says Reuter.

The Queen normally travels around the world on special royal flights.

The commercial flight would more than halve the Queen's travel costs to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Conference in Auckland in November to 292,000 pounds (448,200 dollar) said the Mirror.

The money is due to be paid by New Zealand taxpayers.

The Mirror said the Queen and her husband Prince Philip would occupy the entire first class section of Air New Zealand's Boeing 747-700 Jumbo which is usually taken up by 16 people paying 6,352 pounds (9,751 dollar) for a return ticket.

The first class section would be revamped for the 26 hour flight with a large elegant table in the middle and four armchairs around it, said the newspaper.

The Mirror said up to 384 other passengers would be on the flight.

No immediate comment was available from Buckingham Palace on the report.

### Honourable murderer

INDIANTOWN GAP, Pennsylvania: A man executed for murdering his ex-wife and two daughters in a church parking lot will be buried at a national cemetery because he was an honorably discharged Army veteran, reports AP.

"Burial in a national cemetery is based on the character of one's service. It doesn't matter if one later becomes a saint or a millionaire or a homeless person," said Bill Jayne, spokesman for the Department of Veterans Affairs' National Cemetery System in Washington.

## Parliament forced to adjourn Rao faces protests at train crash site

NEW DELHI, Aug 23: Angry Protesters jeered Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao today when he visited the grim site of India's worst train crash, officials said, reports Reuter.

The Press Trust of India (PTI) said police used clubs to disperse protestors who shouted slogans against the government and claimed the administration had withheld information about the number of dead.

Late on Tuesday the official toll was 278 dead, but Ferozabad Civil Hospital's chief medical superintendent told PTI 299 post-mortem examinations had been performed so far.

In the Indian capital, the

lower house of parliament was forced to adjourn for two hours when deputies of the opposition Janata Dal Party protested that their leader had been barred from making a statement on the train disaster.

Both the opposition and breakaway faction of the ruling Congress Party have demanded that Rao, who took over the railways ministry last week from an ailing minister, resign.

Congress rebels said relief measures were inadequate and even sheets were not available to cover mutilated bodies.

A leftist students' group burnt an effigy of Rao in the eastern city of Calcutta.

## Amethi tour fuels speculation of Gandhis' comeback in politics

NEW DELHI, Aug 23: A planned tour of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's constituency by his family has fuelled speculation here that the famous Nehru-Gandhi clan may be planning a political comeback, reports AFP.

Sonia Gandhi, the slain premier's Italian-born widow, is scheduled to visit Amethi about 500 kilometres (300 miles) southeast of here tomorrow for the first time in eight months.

The enigmatic Sonia, often portrayed by the media as a possible rival to Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao, will be accompanied by her son Rahul, 25, as well as daughter Priyanka, 23.

Sonia is scheduled to inaugurate a medical camp at

of Lucknow on their way to Amethi, from where Rajiv Gandhi was thrice elected to parliament.

Amethi is presently represented in parliament by Petroleum Minister Satish Sharma, a friend of the Gandhis who recently said he was ready to give up his seat to make way for Rahul.

Congress officials say the ruling party would be willing to field Rahul from Amethi, a largely rural constituency in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh.

Sonia has repeatedly refused to be drawn into politics since Rajiv Gandhi, who was prime minister from 1984 to 1989, was blown up by a suicide bomber while campaigning in elections that could have again made him

premier.

But she wields considerable clout in the 110-year-old Congress, India's oldest po-

litical party, and its leaders vie to meet her in downtown New Delhi known popularly by its address — 10 Janpath.

The few times Sonia has

attended Congress meeting along with Rao, she has been lustily cheered by party activists and urged to take over the party leadership, much to the prime minister's embarrassment.

Congress sources say this has led to a souring of ties between the two.

Last week, Sonia boycotted a book release function in an apparent snub to Rao. And a Congress flat to its MPs to be present in New Delhi Thursday is seen as an attempt by Rao to prevent them from flocking to Amethi.

Although Sonia is counted among the most powerful Indians even without an official post, Congress sources say she may be preparing for a political future for Rahul, who holds a management degree

from Harvard.

"This visit may be a sounding board," said a Congress source. "Though the Gandhis have visited Amethi many times in the past, there is a feeling that she may be wanting to formally introduce Rahul to people there."

The Gandhi family has given three prime ministers to India, including Jawaharlal Nehru, the country's first, his daughter Indira Gandhi, and her son Rajiv, who married Sonia in 1968.

"There is no doubt the Gandhi family enjoys tremendous respect in Amethi," said Sheila Dixit, spokeswoman for the rival Congress Party, formed in May. "If any of the Gandhis contest from there, they will win hands down."

