

**BRIEFLY**



US President Bill Clinton (R) talks with US Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (L) before a meeting on Bosnia at the White House Conference Center across the street from the White House in Washington Friday. Clinton briefed members of Congress on the current states of the peace process in Bosnia. — AFP/UNB photo

**Princess Anne to visit Falklands:** Princess Anne will pay an official visit to the Falkland Islands early next year. Buckingham Palace said Friday. AP reports from London.

The January-February tour will be the third official visit to the disputed South Atlantic territory since the 1982 war between Britain and Argentina.

**2 suspects held in Mexico:** Police on Friday arrested two suspects in last week's ambush of seven policemen in the violent state of Guerrero, AP reports from Chilpancingo, Mexico.

Guerrero state Judicial Police Chief Erit Montufar Mendoza said the two belong to a criminal gang that operates in the adjacent state of Michoacan, carrying out armed robberies, kidnappings and other crimes.

**Workers' strike paralyses Anakara:** Nation-wide strikes by public workers grew Friday, paralysing railroads and sea ports, AP reports from Ankara.

Ferry boat routes to and from Izmir were switched to Cesme harbour because of strikes, called by workers seeking a 72 per cent pay hike to keep pace with inflation. The government refuses to give more than 5.4 per cent.

Intercity trains have come to a complete halt after five days of strikes by railroad workers.

**Gerd Bucorius dies in Bonn:** Gerd Bucorius, one of the founders of the prestigious German weekly Die Zeit, died aged 89, the newspapers management announced Friday, AFP reports from Bonn.

Bucorius, a free man of the city of Hamburg where the paper has been published since 1946, had a seat in the lower house of the German Parliament from 1949 to 1962. He was a member of the Conservative Christian Democratic Union, the party of then Chancellor Konrad Adenauer.

**Telegraph editor to quit:** The editor of Britain's best selling national broadsheet, the Daily Telegraph, said Friday he is quitting to edit London's only remaining evening newspaper, AP reports from London.

Max Hastings, 49, will take up his new post at the Evening Standard when editor Stewart Steven retires at the end of the year. He will continue editing the Telegraph until then.

**Velayati meets Iraqi FM:** Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati field talks with his Iraqi counterpart Mohammad Said al-Shahaf at the United Nations in New York, the official Iranian agency IRNA said Friday, AFP reports from Tehran.

The two ministers, who met on the sidelines of the UN general assembly on Thursday, discussed bilateral relations, implementing UN resolution 598 which ended their 1980-88 war and Bosnia, the agency said.

**Quakes jolt Japan's Pacific coast:** A series of earthquakes shook Japan's Pacific coast at close intervals Saturday, with 2,118 tremors recorded in the 24 hours up ending just after 7 a.m (2200 GMT Friday), the Meteorological Agency said, AFP reports from Tokyo.

Eighteen of the jolts were strong enough to be sensed without instruments, it said. The latest and largest of these quakes, which measured 3.9 on the Richter scale, shook Izu Peninsula.

**Landslide kills 18 Filipinos:** Tropical storm Cybil caused a landslide in a southern Philippine town, killing 18 people including seven children younger than 10 years old, police said, Saturday. Seven other people were injured, AP reports from Cagayan, Philippines.

Police Superintendent Creido Rubio, the regional disaster coordinator, said the landslide occurred late Friday as Cybil, the latest of at least a dozen storms to hit the country this year, swept inland.

**Ecuador's VP asked to resign:** President Sixto Duran-Ballen asked Friday for the resignation of his vice president, who is facing impeachment for alleged corruption, AP reports from Quito.

"Tonight, I asked the vice president to present his resignation," Duran-Ballen said in an unexpected televised address to the nation. Vice President Alberto Dahik is facing criminal investigation as well as political impeachment by Congress, and Duran-Ballen said he had asked the Supreme Court and Congress to continue their cases against Dahik in a "serious, transparent and responsible" manner.

**BJP faces setback as split occurs in Gujarat**

NEW DELHI, Sept 30: India's main opposition party has suffered a setback as a split has occurred in its six-month-old government in the key state of Gujarat ahead of parliamentary polls slated for next year, reports AFP.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party, BJP) late Friday expelled dissident leader Shankarsinh Vaghela from the party for six years after he withdrew support for the Chief Minister, Keshubhai Patel.

"There is no question of a compromise now," said senior BJP leader Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, Chief

Minister of the Desert State of Rajasthan, who had been sent as a mediator by the party.

Vaghela, who claims the support of 54 state lawmakers, said in the Gujarat state capital Gandhinagar he would seek the support of state legislators from Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's Congress (I) party in forming a new government in Gujarat.

He said his expulsion was invalid and claimed that he and the 54 rebel lawmakers were part of the BJP.

Congress sources said they were willing to extend support to Vaghela.

**NATO sorts out snags over UN role in Bosnian peace bid**

BRUSSELS, Sept 30: NATO sorted out snags over the role of the UN and handed its military planners a political outline for sending thousands of troops, possibly including Russians, to police an eventual peace in Bosnia, reports Reuter.

"All the points have been agreed... and the military have been asked to complete their end of the process expeditiously," an alliance source said after a marathon meeting of NATO's policy-making Council of Ambassadors on Friday.

"They hope to complete their planning within a week or 10 days, and we aim to have the full plan ready — at least in rough form — by mid-October. There is clearly a sense of urgency."

The unexpectedly long meeting earlier hit a problem over the role the United Nations should play in the peace force.

Diplomatic sources said France led a faction pushing for a clearly defined high-profile role for the UN while the United States argued strongly for it to play a subordinate role. The United States clearly won the argument.

"The UN will have a role with some sort of civilian personality... but it is clear that whatever the role it cannot be one of interference in the military operations," one alliance source said. "There will be no dual key."

NATO has decided its role will be purely military, handling the problems of refugees, humanitarian aid and political contact between the three sides in the three-and-a-half-year conflict to the UN and other agencies.

"We want to avoid mission-creep. Everyone's talks will be very clearly defined. But by dealing with the military tasks we will create a secure

atmosphere for the other agencies to carry out their tasks," an alliance source said.

The 16 NATO ambassadors decided their peace mission would last just 12 months before being handed over to another, probably UN, force that would stay for as long as necessary to cement the peace and help with reconstruction.

While leaving details of the size of the force and its constituents up to the military planners, the ambassadors agreed it should be armed and able to conduct offensive missions of necessity.

"The rules of engagement will be very robust," an alliance source said. "The force will be equipped with heavy tanks, armoured personnel carriers, a large rapid reaction helicopter force and have substantial air cover."

NATO diplomats say the Bosnia "peace implementa-

tion force" is loosely based on a withdrawal plan the alliance drew up at the end of last year to pull UN peacekeepers out of Bosnia and Croatia if their mission collapsed as then seemed likely.

That plan envisaged a 60,000-strong force, about half made up by US troops.

AFP adds: NATO on Friday called for the formation of a peacekeeping force in Bosnia and urged that it become operational as soon as possible, an alliance spokesman said.

Ambassadors to the 16-member North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, who held lengthy talks here, set political guidelines for the deployment of NATO troops in the former Yugoslav republic as soon as hostilities have ended there, the spokesman added.

He said plans for the force could be drawn up within the next ten days.

**31 pilgrims feared drowned in Pakistan**

ISLAMABAD, Sept 30: At least 31 people were feared drowned when a tractor-trolley carrying pilgrims plunged into a canal near the central Pakistani city of Dera Ghazi Khan, police said today, reports AFP.

The victims were returning from a shrine dedicated to Muslim saint Adil Pir late Friday when the vehicle, a trolley pulled by a farm tractor, skidded off a slippery road and fell into the Dera Ghazi Khan Canal, about 500 kilometres (300 miles) southwest of here.

Police said 22 bodies had been recovered while nine children were still missing.

The search for the remaining bodies is continuing, officials said.

**US Senate okays 15 ambassadors appointments**

WASHINGTON, Sept 30: The Senate approved 15 of President Clinton's long-delayed ambassadorial appointments Friday after Democrats cut a deal with the Republican chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, reports AP.

The agreement with Sen Jesse Helms also cleared the way to a Senate vote on a revamp of the State Department. The ambassadors were confirmed by voice vote.

Helms has been sitting on all nominations sent to his Foreign Relations panel since his plans to dismantle the government's foreign aid agency and two other foreign affairs operations were prevented from coming to a vote by Senate Democrats.

Senate rules require 60 votes to cut off debate on the issue and Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole pulled Helms' bill off the floor.

**\$1b Saudi grant for Palestinian authority**

RIYADH, Sept 30: Saudi Arabia today said it has granted the Palestinian authority 100 million dollars in support of self-rule, reports AFP.

The money will go to development projects and to pay part of the Palestinian police's expenses, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) said.

SPA, quoting a statement issued by the Saudi delegation at Thursday's donor countries meeting in Washington, added that Riyadh's contribution was decided as the other countries fulfilled their commitments to self-rule.

Saudi Arabia last year also gave a 100-million-dollar grant to Yasser Arafat's Palestinian authority, which was set up in May 1994 in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho.



An elderly Chechen hugs the former Speaker of Russian parliament Ruslan Khasbulatov (C) upon his arrival at Grozny Airport Friday. Chechen Khasbulatov said that he returned to Chechnya to put the things in order. — AFP/UNB photo

**Tigers plan to kill Chandrika as she is popular among Tamils**

COLOMBO, Sept 30: Tamil rebels plan to kill President Chandrika Kumaratunga by the end of this year because she is popular among the Tamil civilians, the government claimed Saturday, reports AP.

It was the first time that the government has accused the rebels of plotting to assassinate Mrs Kumaratunga, although it has said that it has held several guerillas for spying on her.

In a statement, the government Information Department said interrogation of guerilla suspects had revealed that a woman, whom it identified as Ranjini, was to wear a dress packed with explosives while assassinating the president.

It said a fellow guerilla, Ahila, was preparing such a dress. The statement said Ahila had packed explosives in a dress that another sui-

cide bomber wore during the assassination of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi four years ago.

The government said interrogation of the rebel suspects revealed that several assassination attempts had been in the past few months.

One suspect, Sinnadurai Muhundan, who is under interrogation, had admitted to gathering intelligence during the president's visits, the release said.

Muhundan had been sent to Colombo by the Tiger intelligence chief, Pottu Amman, who has vowed that "the name of Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, should be erased off the face of the earth by the end of the year," the statement said.

AFP adds: Over 100,000 Tamil civilians urged President Chandrika Kumaratunga to order a halt to air attacks in northern Sri Lanka

following the bombing of a school, separatist Tamil rebels said today.

The clandestine radio of the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) said more than 100,000 civilians protested the killing of school children in an air raid last week, according to Tamil sources.

At the end of a three-hour march in the LTTE-controlled Jaffna peninsula, the protesters, including religious leaders, academics and students, prepared a memorandum for Kumaratunga demanding an end to air strikes.

Copies of the document were handed over to Jaffna representatives of the International Red Cross and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to be given to Kumaratunga's office here, the Voice of Tigers Radio said.



Filipino Muslims pray outside the United Arab Emirates consulate Friday. About 300 protesters, mostly Muslims, staged a rally and prayer to call for the release and acquittal of Sarah Balabagan, the 16-year-old Filipina maid condemned to death by an Islamic court in UAE for killing her Emirati employer. Sarah claimed the murder was self-defence after she was raped. — AFP/UNB photo

**Clinton joins hands with Mubarak, Hussein to broaden ME peace**

WASHINGTON, Sept 30: Fresh from the signing of a West Bank accord, President Bill Clinton joined forces on Friday with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Jordan's King Hussein to search for ways to broaden Middle East peace to include Syria, reports Reuter.

Clinton held separate meetings with Mubarak and Hussein in the Oval office for what a White House official said was partly intended to enlist their help in enticing the Syrians back into the peace process.

The Israeli-Syrian "track" of negotiations has been stalled for three months. Syria wants a complete with-

drawal by Israel from the Golan Heights it captured in the 1967 war, while Israel wants Syria to agree to full normal ties before revealing the scope of any withdrawal.

Just about every speaker at Thursday's signing ceremony between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation on extending self-rule on the West Bank urged Syria and its ally, Lebanon, to make the leap for peace.

Clinton said on Friday that until the Israeli-Palestinian peace agreements are completed and "until we have an agreement between Israel and Syria and Lebanon as well, we won't be able to go all the way" toward a comprehensive peace.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher is to meet Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al-Shara in Washington on Monday, the State Department said.

There was no sign of movement from Damascus, where Clinton travelled nearly a year ago to meet Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad. Syrian media on Friday said stalled Syrian-Israeli talks could lead to peace between the two countries only if the Jewish state ended its presence on the Golan Heights.

Washington was looking to Mubarak to use his influence to try to spark some momentum. "I don't think you can

exaggerate the influence of Egypt on this process. They're a key player," one official said.

Mubarak, in an interview with Reuters television, cautioned against linking Thursday's Israeli-Palestinian agreement too closely to the Israeli-Syrian negotiations, saying Syria was an independent country.

But he said he was confident Syria wanted peace in the region, not least so it could redirect spending from military outlays to social improvements for its people.

"I know President Assad very well, he's very keen on peace," Mubarak said, adding that Egypt was ready to sup-

**Delhi appoints mediators to contact Al-Faran**

SRINAGAR, Sept 30: Indian authorities appointed fresh mediators late Friday in a bid to resume snapped contact with the Muslim rebel abductors holding four Western tourists for nearly three months in Kashmir, reports AFP.

An official spokesman, meanwhile, expressed cautious optimism that contact with the Al-Faran rebel group would be resumed over the weekend, adding that intermediaries had said the hostages were "safe."

He gave no details about the new mediators.

The official crisis management group, led by retired Lieutenant General D D Sakiani — an adviser to the Kashmir government, held an emergency meeting in this state summer capital to review the situation, officials said.

Diplomats from Britain, the United States and Germany were also present at the meeting which discussed

the breaking of links with Al-Faran. There has been no contact for more than 10 days.

AP adds from United Nations: In an outburst aimed at Pakistan, India on Friday accused foreign countries of helping Muslim rebels in Kashmir build "an empire of terror."

Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee, in a speech to the UN General Assembly, blamed "foreign mercenaries for last month's beheading of Norwegian hostage Hans Christian Ostro in Jammu-Kashmir."

"An empire of terror is being built up with arms and money sent across borders," Mukherjee said during the 185-nation assembly's annual debate.

"Terrorism is the black plague of our time," he said.

Mukherjee did not mention Kashmir or Pakistan, but the references to alleged involvement by India's arch-enemy were clear.

**Off the Record**

**Hunting lion from the balcony!**

LAVA HOT SPRINGS, Idaho: Woney Peters had never hunted a lion, mountain or otherwise, until he killed one from the balcony of his house, reports AP.

"I never thought I'd have an African lion in my sights," the lifelong hunter said Friday. He lives next to Lava's elementary school, and the father of five said he would just as soon not hunt lions so close to home.

Lions and lion-tiger hybrids escaped from Ligertown, a compound near Lava, on September 20. Officials thought they had all the beasts corralled or killed, but learned otherwise when Peters bagged his cat Thursday night. It was the 19th slain. Another 27 big cats have been taken to a California game preserve.

The 40-year-old railway worker knew something was wrong when he, his wife Laurie and their 8-year-old daughter, Katie, pulled up to his house and saw their two horses blowing and snorting.

Eventually he spotted an adult male lion behind a tree. While his wife called police, Peters watched the lion through his rifle scope for about 10 minutes, then fired when it stepped from behind trees about 200 yards (meters) away.

"It was about the scariest shot I ever shot," Peters said. "It had to be a kill shot."

The lion took a few steps, fell and began writhing. A 12-man Bannock County Sheriff's team arrived within minutes and started searching the hillside.

**Second time unlucky**

LOS ANGELES: Actress Elizabeth Taylor will undergo surgery once again after her second hip replacement operation proved unsuccessful, her publicist said on Friday, reports Reuter.

Taylor, 63 whose movie career has been overshadowed by a litany of health and personal problems, will enter a hospital in about three weeks to get a new replacement for her right hip. It was originally replaced in June, 15 months after she received a new left hip.

Earlier this month, Taylor spent three days in hospital for an irregular heartbeat. Last month she announced a "trial separation" from her seventh husband, construction worker Larry Fortensky.

Throughout her career, which was highlighted by academy awards for "Butterfield 8" and "Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf?" Taylor has also battled weight problems and drug dependency.

Her publicist, Chen Sam, said further information about Taylor's medical condition would be released next week.



**N-deal with Iran suspended, not cancelled: Qian**

NEW YORK, Sept 30: Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen confirmed Friday that the deal with Iran to supply nuclear weapons was off, but insisted it was "suspended" and not cancelled as US officials had said, reports AFP.

Saying that the site Iran chose for two nuclear reactors was not suitable, Qian said "this contract has been suspended for the time being."

AP adds: Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen said reports of China canceling its sale of nuclear reactors to Iran were an overstatement.

After a meeting between Qian and Secretary of State Warren Christopher on Wednesday, a Clinton Administration official said

Friday that Qian had "made it clear that the Iran reactor deal would not be implemented." That was interpreted as meaning the deal was cancelled.

But Qian said the contract has been "suspended for the time being" because Iran wanted to put the reactors on inappropriate sites. He did not elaborate on what was wrong with the sites.

Qian made the statement in response to a question after a speech to the US Foreign Policy Association.

In the speech, Qian gave the United States a stern lecture about avoiding further tensions over Taiwan.

Relations between the two countries have been strained by a number of issues, including trade and human rights.

port the United States in its efforts to secure a peace accord.

The White House disclosed that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin implored Clinton anew on Thursday during their talks to grant clemency to Jonathan Pollard, the American who has served 10 years of a life sentence for spying for Israel.

Spokesman Mike McCurry said Clinton turned Rabin down, telling him that until Pollard becomes eligible for parole, Clinton can only consider clemency recommendations from the Justice Department, and there have been none. Pollard becomes eligible

The parties agreed to cooperate on fostering economic development in the West Bank, expanding availability of water resources and working together on regional issues.