

# BRIEFLY



Government employees unload large portraits of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein on Saturday in order to fix them in Baghdad streets as part of the preparations for the October 15 referendum on extending the term of Saddam Hussein, 58, who has been president since 1979, for another 7 years. Iraqi officials are pressuring their people to vote for Saddam Hussein as president in this month's referendum, an opposition member said October 5. — AFP/UNB photo

**Al-Gore meets Chernomyrdin:** US Vice President Al Gore and Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin met privately at a remote Maine airport on Saturday for what aides said were talks on economic cooperation. Reuter reports from Bangor Maine.

Neither Gore nor Chernomyrdin spoke to reporters prior to the session, and officials were tight lipped about the exact agenda for the meeting which was expected to last three hours.

**13 killed in ROK road mishap:** At least 13 people were killed and seven others were seriously injured yesterday in an expressway traffic accident involving a bus and two trucks reports said, AFP reports from Seoul.

The accident took place near the central city of Chonan when a truck jumped the expressway's central concrete barrier and crashed into another truck and a bus on the opposite lane, the Yonhap news agency said.

**Mild quake shakes South Korea:** A minor earthquake shook a southeastern coast of the Korean peninsula yesterday, but no property damage or injuries were reported, television said, AFP reports from Seoul.

The quake, measuring 4 on the open-ended Richter scale, rattled windows and buildings for 10 seconds in the southeastern port city of Ulsan and its vicinity, Yonhap Television News (YTN) said.

**Palestinian dies in Israeli camp:** A 23-year-old Palestinian prisoner was found dead in an Israeli military detention centre on Saturday, and his body showed signs of violence a military source said in Jerusalem, AFP reports from Jerusalem.

The dead was named as Mohammed Abdelrazek Abu Shakra from Ramallah in the West Bank.

**Cop kills wife, 2 others in Morocco:** An off-duty police officer gone berserk killed his wife at his home then opened fire at a beachside hotel, killing a British couple as tourists scrambled for cover, authorities said Saturday, AP reports from Morocco.

A police inspector in civilian clothes fatally shot his wife and wounded his brother-in-law Friday night, then drove to the Tarik Hotel, investigators said on condition of anonymity.

**Ex-governor killed in Colombia:** Guerrillas killed the former Governor of Cesar Department in Colombia, Armando Maestre Saturday, attacking his vehicle with machine gun bursts while it was travelling in that northeast area, police said, AFP reports from Bogota.

Maestre, 58, was a member of the Liberal Party and was currently the director of the Ganadero Bank in Villandupar, the capital of Cesar Department.

**FPI to boycott polls in Ivory Coast:** Ivory Coast's main opposition party formally called on its members to boycott national elections but said it would continue talks with the government to defuse a crisis that has cost at least five lives, Reuter reports from Abidjan.

A special convention of the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI), held the day after late night talks between President Henri Konan Bedie and his opposition rivals, urged party militants to remain mobilised and await orders.

**6 die in Pak tribal clash:** Six people were killed in an attack by gunmen on a van carrying passengers in the tribal area of Waziristan in northwest Pakistan, reports said yesterday, AFP reports from Islamabad.

**Taleban to allow women's education**

ISLAMABAD, Oct 8: A senior UN official said on Saturday that Afghanistan's Taleban Islamic Movement had assured him it would allow women to be educated in areas it controls, reports Reuter.

Under Secretary General for humanitarian affairs Peter Hansen told reporters in Islamabad that the assurance was given to him on Friday when he visited the southern Afghan town of Kandahar, the headquarters of Taleban.

Earlier press reports from the area said Taleban had banned girls from schools in the western town of Herat after it captured the area from pro-government forces last month.

## Uncertain peace toughens choice for '95 Nobel Peace Prize

OSLO, Norway, Oct 8: Last year, the Middle East peace treaty was obvious. A year earlier, reconciliation in South Africa was the clear favourite, reports AP.

This year, with peace still uncertain in places like Bosnia and Northern Ireland, speculation has been tougher for the Nobel Peace Prize, now worth 1 million dollars.

The announcement Friday will cap a week of Nobel suspense. Before then, four other prizes for the sciences will be announced in Stockholm, Sweden. Irish poet Seamus Heaney was first out this year, winning the literature prize last Thursday.

Among the top prospects for the peace prize are former US President Jimmy Carter, Mexican Bishop Samuel Ruiz, Catholic Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo of East Timor, and Kurdish parliamentarian Leyla Zana, according to Norwegian media.

There are 117 candidates, and the five-member awards committee never even releases their names, much less hints about winners before the announcement.

The committee is extra silent this year because of the leak last year of two winners' names — PLO leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The Norwegian media missed the third winner, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

If the well-connected Norwegian media knows the winner this year, they aren't saying. Reports have said only that the 1995 winner already

## Bosnia alone needs \$12b to rebuild itself

WARSAW, Oct 8: Bosnia alone needs 12 billion dollars of aid to rebuild itself once war ends and Serbia should get no help until it meets stringent conditions, Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic said in Warsaw on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Talk of rebuilding the Balkan country has become less idle in the wake of a dynamic US-led peace effort that has forged a ceasefire deal due to commence on Tuesday if utility supplies are reconnected to besieged Sarajevo.

Silajdzic said Hungary, through which Russian gas supplies pass through to Bosnia, would reopen values today, helping pave the way for the ceasefire to take effect.

Gas, water and electricity supplies to the Bosnian capital have been repeatedly interrupted by separatist Serbs in the course of the 42 month war.

Silajdzic was asked whether the ceasefire could still take effect if for technical reasons electricity had not been restored to Sarajevo by the time it was due to start.

## Quake underlines Indonesia most unstable region

JAKARTA, Oct 8: The powerful earthquake that rocked Sumatra underlines Indonesia as one of the most unstable geological regions in the world, reports AP.

Active volcanoes are part of the scenery and earth tremors common in the island chain that 190 million people call home. The question is not whether another natural disaster will occur, but when.

Saturday's magnitude 7 quake in southern Sumatra occurred on the so-called Ring of Fire, volcano and earthquake prone regions encircling the Pacific Ocean.

A major earthquake last hit southern Sumatra in February 1994, causing widespread damage and killing at least 200 people.

Officials at the National Institute of Geology in Bandung say Indonesia registers more than 400 earthquakes and 10 volcanic eruptions a year.

There are at least 500 volcanoes, 127 of them active, and 70 which are known as "A-type" because they have erupted in the past. Of the major islands, only Borneo — now called Kalimantan has no volcanoes.

## Filipina maid's appeal trial begins in UAE

ABU DHABI, Oct 8: Young Filipina maid Sarah Balabagan begins an appeal trial on Monday hoping for freedom but many United Arab Emirates nationals insist her death sentence for murder must stand, reports Reuter.

"She should be executed in public as a warning to others. If you come here to work you have to respect our laws. This is the United Arab Emirates, not the Philippines or the West," said government employee Khalid al-Raisi.

The uproar that erupted after an Islamic Court in Al-Ain condemned Balabagan to death on September 16 for the premeditated murder of her UAE employer has fuelled resentment among nationals of this Gulf Arab federation.

Reflecting the view of many in this oil-rich Emirate, the court rejected Balabagan's claim that she stabbed Almas Mohammed al-Baloushi 34 times in the self-defence after wrestling his knife away during a rape.

## 320m dollar spent : Chandrika Lanka can't afford battle against Tamil rebels

COLOMBO, Oct 8: President Chandrika Kumaratunga slammed a pro-war lobby led by Buddhist monks and said Sri Lanka cannot afford its battle against separatist Tamil guerillas, a state-run weekly reported today, says AFP.

Kumaratunga said the government had spent 16 billion rupees (320 million dollars) on the war since the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) ended a truce and resumed their separatist war on April 19.

"Some people, including some Buddhist monks want a military solution to the ethnic problem. Are we prepared to mobilise another 100,000 youth?"

"If those who want war can find another 500 billion rupees (10 billion dollars) we might then succeed in this effort."

"The war cannot be won until Tamil people are guaranteed their rights as a community," Kumaratunga said.

Her remarks came as a major military drive against

the LTTE in the island's northern Jaffna peninsula entered its second week. The military says it has killed more than 300 rebels for the loss of 53 soldiers in the campaign.



Kumaratunga said the government's strategy was to resist the LTTE insurgency and achieve a political settlement to the conflict which has claimed more than 50,000 lives since 1972.

Meanwhile, Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumara-

tunga today opened a commonwealth parliamentary conference here with a call for reform of the United Nations system in a bid to give greater say for smaller states.

Kumaratunga said the new world order following the end of the Cold War was unfavourable to developing nations.

"There is a need for the UN to revert to one-nation one-vote principle," she said, observing that the big powers had banded together to strengthen the UN Security Council — where they enjoyed veto powers — in the name of peacekeeping.

She made no direct reference to any country.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association meeting ending Friday will focus on human rights, democracy and development in the 47 member states, which were once subject to the imperial government of Britain, some 350 delegates from 127 legislative bodies are attending.

## Israel to begin pullout from parts of WB in a week or two

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip, Oct 8: Israel will begin withdrawing troops from parts of the West Bank in a week or two, slightly behind schedule, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said early Sunday after talks with PLO Chief Yasser Arafat, reports AP.

Peres and Arafat met at the Erez Crossing on the Israel-Gaza border to hammer out details on implementing the West Bank autonomy plan signed September 28 in Washington.

They appeared to sidestep a dispute about Israel's refusal to release some female Palestinian prisoners, which had threatened to disrupt the process.

"Redeployment will begin in a short time, a week or two, in four villages, and then we will go district-by-district," Peres said, without naming the villages. The sides had earlier agreed on an initial, symbolic withdrawal as early as Sunday.

Peres said Israel intends to complete withdrawing from the West Bank's six major towns by the end of December.

The pullout from the re-

maining town of Hebron is complicated by the presence of 450 Jewish settlers among its 120,000 Palestinians. Israeli troops are to leave most of Hebron in six months, after completion of a bypass road for settlers.

Peres said Israeli and Palestinian officers would meet later Sunday at Erez to finalise the withdrawal timetable.

Arafat called the meeting "very fruitful" and renewed a pledge to fight Palestinian militants trying to derail the peace process with attacks on Israelis.

The pullout from the re-



South Korean women's rights activists burn US and Japanese cigarettes at a Seoul park Saturday in a nationwide campaign to boycott foreign cigarettes which accounts for 12.3 per cent of South Korea's market, with the Japanese brand "Mild Seven," attributing half. The slogan written in red reads, "Let's expel foreign cigarettes."

## Al-Faran begins shifting camp in Himalayas

SRINAGAR, India, Oct 8: Indian officials said today that guerillas holding four Westerners hostage in Kashmir had begun shifting camp in the Himalayas, but ruled out any attempt by security forces to pursue them, reports Reuter.

"It must be pretty cold there and that could also be one of the reasons why they are moving from place to place," said K B Jandial, spokesman for the Jammu and Kashmir government.

"The movements are also for strategic reasons," said Jandial, speaking in the

state's summer capital of Srinagar.

He said there was no reason to feel concern for the safety of the hostages despite the refusal of their captors, the previously unknown Al-Faran group, to reestablish contact with the authorities in the past 19 days.

"Based on information from different sources, we believe they are safe," Jandial said.

But he ruled out any government bid to track down the kidnapers of American Donald Hutchings, German

Dirk Hasert and Britons Keith Mangan and Paul Wells.

The tourists were seized four months ago while trekking in the mountains.

"We are not chasing them because it could be misconstrued and would jeopardise the lives of the tourists," Jandial said. "We will not get into any adventure."

The authorities believe a rescue raid would endanger the lives of the captives.

One captive, Norwegian Hans Christian Ostroe, was found beheaded on August 13.

## Off the Record

**Drama in real life**

MIDWEST, Wyoming: An 83-year-old woman stranded in the desolate grasslands for more than a week was rescued after living on fruit juice and the frost she scraped off the hood of her car, reports AP.

Mae Wardell drank the half-dozen or so cans of orange, apricot and other juices she had with her and layered on all the extra clothes she could find — a sweater, jacket and a couple of pairs of pants when the temperature dropped below freezing.

"It's amazing", Midwest Police Chief Gary Jackson said. "She did the right thing to stay with her vehicle. When you get a into a week or so it begins looking a little grim."

Wardell left Casper, where she had been visiting her sister at a nursing home, on September 29 and headed home to Gillette, about 130 miles (210 kilometres) north-east. But she got lost and stuck in the mud, then wore her car battery down trying to get free.

On Saturday, a father and son out hunting about 15 miles (25 kilometres) west of Midwest — a central Wyoming town of about 400 people came across her car and found her lying on the front seat, conscious and happy to see them.

## Pregnants — be cautious about vitamin

WASHINGTON: High doses of vitamin A in pregnant women increase the risk of birth defects such as cleft palate and malformations of the head and heart according to a study released Friday, reports AFP.

Data gathered from more than 22,000 pregnant women found that one of every 60 babies born to women taking more than 10,000 iu of vitamin A daily or about four times the recommended intake, was adversely affected by the vitamin, the study said.

The study, conducted from 1984-87 by a team of researchers at Boston University medical school is to be published in the November 23 issue of the New England Journal of Medicine.

"Preparations of vitamin A available in food stores and health stores contain as much as 25,000 iu of vitamin A in a single capsule, it said.

"This level... is a potentially teratogenic (birth defect inducing) dose", it warned, further, "that by the time a woman realises she is pregnant it may be too late to reduce high vitamin A intake enough to avoid adverse effects".

## Yeltsin may impose state of emergency in Grozny

MOSCOW, Oct 8: President Boris Yeltsin was considering imposing a state of emergency on Grozny, capital of Russia's breakaway region of Chechnya, after his military commander there was badly injured in a bomb attack, reports Reuter.

Lieutenant General Anatoly Romanov, who was flown to Moscow on Saturday for emergency hospital treatment, remained in critical condition with wounds to the head, legs and abdomen, ITAR-Tass news agency said.

Yeltsin's spokesman told Tass the president was weighing a government call for a state of emergency in Grozny following Friday's

bombing, which came during a delicate stage in peace negotiations with the Chechen rebels.

Spokesman Sergei Medvedev said Yeltsin saw grounds for such a measure but he added: It is necessary to consider all the consequences which could follow declaring a state of emergency."

A curfew is still in force in Grozny and it was not clear what extra measures a state of emergency would involve.

## Victims to speak at UN war crimes tribunal on Bosnia

THE HAGUE, Oct 8: Victims and witnesses of atrocities in former Yugoslavia will speak for the first time at the UN war crimes tribunal in the Hague this week, reports Reuter.

They will testify at hearing in the case of Bosnian Serb prison camp commander Dragan Nikolic who was the first person indicted by the criminal tribunal for former Yugoslavia.

Nikolic has remained free since he was charged in November 1994 with killing eight Muslim prisoners, torturing 10 others and injuring three more at the Susic Camp in northeast Bosnia.

Norwegians also are concerned with human rights violations in China, raising the odds for Jingsheng or other dissidents.

The awards ceremony will be on December 10.