

BRIEFLY



Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat talks to wife of former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, late on Saturday from his office in Gaza City, to express his sympathy after the premier's assassination a few hours before. Arafat told Leah Rabin he was "saddened and shocked" by the news that Rabin had been killed by a Jewish extremist at a peace rally in Tel Aviv. — AFP/UNB photo

**Vietnam deports 2 Americans:** Vietnam has expelled two Vietnamese-Americans jailed in August on charges of plotting to overthrow the Hanoi government, Vietnamese and US officials said yesterday. Reuter reports from Hanoi.

A Vietnamese official, speaking by phone from Ho Chi Minh City, said Nguyen Tan Tri and Tran Quang Liem had been deported from Vietnam on Sunday morning, just hours after the official Vietnam news agency announced Hanoi's decision to expel them.

**Strong quake rocks Sumatra:** An earthquake measuring 6.3 on the open-ended Richter scale struck an Indonesian island of Sumatra but there were no immediate reports of casualties, a local meteorological official said yesterday. Reuter reports from Jakarta. The official from the Meteorology and Geophysics Institute in Kepahiang, south Sumatra, said the epicentre of the quake, which struck late on Sunday, was under the sea about 15 km (9.3 miles) east of Enggano Island and some 500 km (310 miles) northwest of Jakarta.

**34 militants killed in Algeria:** Algerian security forces have killed 34 Muslim militants in operations in different parts of the country in the last week, the Algerian official news agency APS said on Sunday. Reuter reports from Paris.

Fourteen of those killed were shot dead in the mountainous Djebel Kef Lakhdar area near Medea town, some 70 km southwest of Algiers, APS quoted a security official statement as saying.

**Quake hits Chinese mountains:** An earthquake measuring 5.2 on the Richter scale hit China's Tanggula mountains in the north-western province of Qinghai yesterday, the State Seismological Bureau (SSB) said, AFP reports from Beijing.

The epicentre of the quake, which occurred at 1:14 am (17:15 GMT Sunday), was at 33.3 degrees latitude north, 91.7 degrees longitude east on the border between Qinghai and Tibet, an SSB official said.

**17 die in train mishap in Rajasthan:** At least 17 persons were killed as a train crushed a jeep near Jodhpur town in the North Indian state of Rajasthan yesterday, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported. Reuter reports from New Delhi.

The PTI said that eight women and seven children were among the dead. The train ran into the jeep at an unmanned railway crossing, the news agency said but did not give details.

**Manila typhoon toll rises to 500:** Nearly 500 people were killed by super-typhoon Angela's rampage through the main Philippine island of Luzon and the toll will probably continue to rise, relief officials said yesterday. Reuter reports from Manila.

The Office of Civil Defence (OCD) said 490 people perished when Angela ripped through the Bicol region at the southern end of Luzon and sideswiped Manila last Friday.

**Gunmen kill 6 in Colombia:** At least six people were killed in an attack by about 70 unidentified gunmen on a small town in Colombia's north-west province of Choco, the RCN radio network said on Sunday. Reuter reports from Bogota.

It quoted a local government official as saying the attack occurred on Saturday afternoon in the municipality of El Capitan, and said one person was missing in the aftermath of the attack.

**Shuttle 'Columbia' lands smoothly:** Space shuttle Columbia glided to a smooth landing, at Kennedy Space Centre on Sunday with seven astronauts aboard, ending a low-key, 16-day science mission. Reuter reports from Cape Canaveral.

A Florida cold front had threatened to postpone the landing. NASA officials feared low-lying clouds and high winds would mean Columbia would have to wait until Monday or even Tuesday to land.

**2 Sri Lankan priests detained**

COLOMBO, Nov 6: Two Sri Lankan priests have been detained trying to cross over into rebel-held territory carrying more than two million rupees (40,000 dollar) and restricted goods in the false bottom of a van, a military source said today, reports Reuter.

The two, believed to be from the northern Jaffna peninsula, were carrying motorcycle spare parts, copper wire, batteries and other goods restricted in the north, the source said. They were detained at the town of Vavuniya, bordering the formerly Tamil rebel-controlled peninsula, on Sunday.

**Delhi's plan to hold polls in Kashmir evokes mixed reaction**

NEW DELHI, Nov 6: India's plan to hold elections in the troubled northern state of Jammu and Kashmir evoked a mixed reaction on Sunday from political parties and the press, reports Reuter. Some called it risky while others welcomed the move. The cabinet, headed by Home Minister Shankarrao Chavan, decided on Saturday to recommend polls in the province next month in a bid to end separatist strife in the state. The Election Commission has to decide on it. Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao is keen on holding elections in the only

Muslim-majority state in mainly Hindu India ahead of general elections, due by June 1996. Coinciding with the cabinet's decision, Rao, on a visit to the African state of Burkina Faso, promised more autonomy to Kashmir, banking on an accord New Delhi signed in 1975 with the National Conference Party headed by the late Sheikh Abdullah. "We welcome the decision of the cabinet. The people of the state are disenchanted with militancy and have been wanting a popular government to be installed in the state," said Ved Prakash,

spokesman for Rao's Congress Party. The right-wing Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) described Rao's election as a surrender to separatists. "A countrywide agitation will be launched if the disgraceful package is not withdrawn forthwith," it said in a statement. "It is a conspiracy against the nation, hatched in secrecy, deliberated in dishonesty and announced on a foreign soil." Kashmir's All-Party Hurriyat (freedom) Conference, a separatist organisation of some 30 religious and political groups, blasted the elec-

tions when it opened an office in Delhi and wooed Indian opposition parties for support. "Any attempt to impose elections in the state is wholly misconceived and is fraught with serious consequences," said Hurriyat leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani. "It will clearly mean more bloodshed," said Yasin Malik of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF). Hurriyat wants the implementation of a 1948 UN resolution to hold a plebiscite in the region and says India wants a shotgun wedding. "No forced marriages, no forced unions," Hurriyat ac-

tivist Hamida Bano said. Political analysts say Rao is hoping to repeat in Kashmir the success he achieved in Punjab where elections were held in 1992, ending a decade-long Sikh separatist movement in which about 10,000 people were killed. "We (India) had a firm grip on the administration in Punjab, which is not the case with Jammu and Kashmir," said BJP president L K Advani. National Conference leader and former chief minister of Kashmir Farooq Abdullah, whose father signed the 1975 accord, said he would place Rao's formula be-

fore his party's working committee. The formula allows naming the head of the state government as Wazir-e-Azam, which means prime minister in Urdu, Kashmir's official language. Elections to the Jammu and Kashmir legislative assembly were last held in 1987. Three years later India imposed direct rule on the state. Separatist groups, some wanting independence for Kashmir and others union with Pakistan, oppose elections in the state, where 20,000 people have been killed in the last five years.

**Shevardnadze reelected** LONDON, Nov 6: Eduard Shevardnadze has been re-elected President of Georgia, according to preliminary results from elections on Sunday. I-TAR-Tass news agency said in a report monitored here, reports AFP. The agency quoted "an official trustworthy source" as saying Shevardnadze had received more than 70 per cent of the vote. The central electoral commission in Georgia said more than 60 per cent of the electorate had voted in the poll, according to the report monitored by the BBC.

**Over 70,000 Tamil refugees in Kilinochchi face starvation**

VAVUNIYA, Sri Lanka, Nov 6: More than 70,000 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in the town of Kilinochchi face starvation and disease after fleeing the war in the northern Jaffna Peninsula, the town's government administrator said today. Singarampillai Thillanadarajah told Reuters in Vavuniya, the northern most town under government control, that the problem would worsen soon with the arrival of more than 300,000 refugees from across the lagoon where troops are fighting Tamil rebels. "If we do not get the supplies fairly quickly, we are starting at a human disaster," he said. Troops are massing at the approaches to Jaffna Town, from where the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

(LTTE) has fought a 12 year war for a Tamil homeland in the north and east. Most refugees are located between 10 and 30 km (six and 19 miles) from Jaffna Town, Chavakachcheri to the east, waiting to cross the lagoon to the rebel-held area of Kilinochchi to the south. Thillanadarajah said they included infants and 70 year olds, many already ill with diarrhoea, viral fever and eye ailments. There are only two government doctors and three from the relief agency Medicine Sans Frontiers to treat them, he added. An earlier AFP reports adds: Tens of thousands of Tamils are fleeing Sri Lanka's war-torn northern Jaffna Peninsula, triggering acute food shortages and raising international concern, offi-

cials here say. An estimated 300,000 men, women and children have fled Jaffna Town, the citadel of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), since Sri Lankan troops launched a major military offensive on October 17. Travellers from the region said in this town, 254 kilometres (157 miles) north of Colombo and the gateway to the LTTE-controlled north, that most people had left their homes with just the clothes they were in. It is the biggest civilian exodus from Jaffna since Indian troops deployed in Sri Lanka's embattled northeast eight years ago went to war against the LTTE in October 1987. "The situation is worsening by the day," said K Ganesh,

the chief Sri Lankan official in Vavuniya, the northern part of which is held by the LTTE and the southern part by Colombo. "At least 10,000 have been arriving daily in recent days," he said here, adding that 60,000 people had already poured into LTTE-administered Kilinochchi in the mainland, south of Jaffna, and thousands more were expected. Tamil activists here and other Tamils coming from Kilinochchi, however, put the number of refugees at no less than 100,000, and said another 200,000 were about to cross from Jaffna Peninsula in some 250 boats. "It is a very serious situation," said Geeti Langanathan, the chairman of the Vavuniya Urban Council.

**500m people homeless in cities, towns, says UN**

WASHINGTON, Nov 6: A half billion people in cities and towns worldwide are homeless or live in inferior housing, a burgeoning problem that threatens the economic and social fabric of many nations, a UN agency said on Sunday, reports Reuter. "Homelessness is on the increase everywhere, in the developed world as well as in the underdeveloped world," said Wally N'Dow, head of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlement Habitat. "No one can afford the exploding urban blight, socially, economically and politically." Housing shortages and poor housing conditions — the results of massive urbanisation — are life-threatening, the centre, which provides technical support to governments, said. Sub-standard housing, un-

safe water and poor sanitation in densely populated cities, are responsible for ten million deaths worldwide every year, it added in a special report. The problem is getting worse because housing cannot keep up with an exploding urban population, which will double from 2.4 billion in 1995 from five billion in the year 2025. "We will witness a doubling of the homeless and shelterless people (unless we act)," N'Dow told Reuters. "That's a catastrophe. It's a clear and present danger." The centre said the cities with the worst housing problems include Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, with 79 per cent of the people homeless or living in inferior housing; Jakarta, Indonesia, with 54 per cent, and Bogota, Colombia, with 50 per cent.

**Kissinger for good Sino-US ties**

HONG KONG, Nov 6: Any attempt by the United States to "contain" China in the same way it did with the Soviet Union would be a recipe for disaster, former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger said here today, reports AFP. Speaking at a business forum, the veteran statesman said Washington would suffer the loss of friends throughout Asia if it tries to take a tough line with Beijing. "Such a policy would damage China without any doubt," said Kissinger, whose 1971 secret visit to Beijing as President Richard Nixon's envoy paved the way to improve Sino-US relations. "But it would also damage the United States, because I believe that all the nations of Asia would then move into a position equally distant from China and the United States," he said.



Polish President Lech Walesa waits in line with his daughter Brygida as his wife Danuta (R) enjoys her moment in the spot-light while voting for Poland's tightly-contested presidential elections on Sunday. — AFP/UNB photo

**Mass production of Anti-cancer herb injections in China**

HANGZHOU, Nov 6: A new anti-cancer injection that can reportedly restrain the development of cancer cells and improve immunity of the human body was put into mass production Saturday in this capital of Zhejiang province, east China, reports Xinhua. The injection produced by the Jiang Kanglaite Pharmaceutical Company is made with traditional Chinese medicinal herbs. Trial use in several hospitals shows that the injection is especially effective on advanced-stage lung, liver and other cancers. The development of the new drug has taken nearly twenty years of researchers of the Zhejiang Provincial Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine, the Shanghai Pharmaceutical Institute and the Shanghai Medical College.

**Chechens cautiously welcome Khasbulatov's peace proposal**

MOSCOW, Nov 6: Chechen separatists cautiously welcomed Sunday a peace proposal for the southern Russian republic of Chechnya put forward by former Russian opposition leader Ruslan Khasbulatov, reports AFP. Chechen spokesman Khodzhi-Ahmed Yerikhanov said Khasbulatov's four-point proposal aimed at kickstarting the deadlocked peace process made some sense. "All of what Khasbulatov says is not without a certain sense," separatist leader told Russian news agency Interfax a day after the former speaker of the Russian parliament, an ethnic Chechen, urged leaders on both sides to sign a provisional accord on bilateral ties.

Khasbulatov returned to his native Chechnya with the backing of President Boris Yeltsin recently to act as mediator between the disputing sides in the war-torn Caucasus republic. The mediator, once a bitter Yeltsin enemy, urged Russian and Chechen separatist leaders to sign a document which would provide for the demilitarisation of Chechnya: The creation of the currency and citizenship; and allow free movement across the border. Khasbulatov's initiative comes at a time when the peace process in the tiny Muslim Caucasus republic is stalling amid mutual suspicion and renewed violence. Negotiations to firm up a

July 30 military accord, which provided for Chechens' disarmament in return for a Russian troop pullout, were suspended after an assassination attempt last month on General Anatoly Romanov, Moscow's former top commander in Chechnya. The Chechens meanwhile complain that Russian troops and air forces have harassed and bombed mountain villages. Romanov's successor, General Anatoly Shkirko said Sunday he had given orders for additional measures to prevent a further destabilisation of situation. The main reason the talks process has stalled, however, is disagreement over Chechnya's political status.

**Off the Record**

**Unpardonable errors!**

SYDNEY: About 18,000 Australians die each year and another 50,000 suffer permanent disabilities from complications caused by their care in hospital or in the health system, a new study of Australian health care says, reports Reuter. Another 28,000 patients admitted to hospital each year suffer a temporary disability because of mishaps, said the study called "the quality of Australian health care" and published on Monday in the latest issue of the monthly Medical Journal of Australia. The study, conducted by a government taskforce, said about half of all adverse events suffered by patients in the Australian health care system were avoidable. It said there were 470,000 adverse events each year, which it defined as unintended injury which resulted in death, disability or prolonged hospital stay. The study, which recommended guidelines to improve hospital management to avoid accidents, is based on 14 179 patients' records and 28 hospitals in 1992.

**Welcome to have a glimpse of Ramses' token of love**

LUXOR, Egypt: The 3,200-year-old Pharonic tomb of Queen Nefertari opened to the public on Saturday for the first time since its discovery in 1904 following a decade of restoration work, reports Reuter. The tomb is hailed by archaeologists as the most beautiful in the ancient burial ground of the Valley of the Queens and has been closed since its discovery by Italian Egyptologist Ernesto Schiaparelli. Egyptologists say Ramses II, one of Egypt's most powerful rulers, built the tomb as a token of his love for his favourite wife and chief consort Nefertari. Flood water and rock salt had destroyed the tomb's brightly painted interior so badly that archaeologists were at a loss to restore it. But work on the tomb began in 1986 after years of consultation and with the help of the American-based Getty Foundation which provided 3 million dollars for the overhaul. Over 520 square yards (430 square metres) of Stucco painting damaged by salt and water were carefully pieced together with the help of photographs taken by Schiaparelli. Egypt's Supreme Council for Antiquities said the opening was attended by archaeologists and Egyptian dignitaries and coincided with the city's anniversary day. Only 150 tourists will be allowed into the tomb each day to prevent any more damage to its fragile walls.

**Serbs in eastern Slavonia reject peace proposal**

BELGRADE, Nov 6: Rebel Serbs in Croatia's eastern Slavonia region have rejected new peace proposals on the area's peaceful return to Zagreb's rule, the Yugoslav news agency Tanjug said, reports Reuter. Milan Molanovic chief Serb negotiator said his side had rejected a draft document offered by mediators Peter Galbraith, US ambassador to Croatia and UN envoy Thorvald Stoltenberg after lengthy talks with them on Sunday. Molanovic declined to say why the Serb side had rejected the peace proposals but added that the talks were "not over as far as the Serb side was concerned," Tanjug reported. The Serbs had offered their own document stipulating a three-year transition period during which eastern Slavonia would be under UN administration, followed by a referendum to decide on its

final status it quoted Milanovic as saying. Eastern Slavonia is the last area of Croatia still controlled by Serbs after Zagreb's forces recaptured other regions this summer. Croatian President Franjo Tudjman said on Saturday the UN peacekeeping mandate in Croatia would not be renewed at the end of this month. The return of eastern Slavonia had to be agreed by then to avoid war, he added. Another report from Sarajevo adds: Attackers opened fire and hurled grenades at French troops in a UN base near the west Bosnian town of Mostar, wounding seven, a UN spokesman said in Sarajevo today. One french guard was hit in the arm by a bullet and six French soldiers were slightly hurt by a grenade blast during the attack at about 11.30 pm (22:30 gmt) on Sunday night. Lieutenant Colonel Chris Vernon told reporters.



Algerian supporters of the Islamic Society Movement-Hamas (MSI-Hamas) hold a campaign poster of the party's presidential candidate Mahfoud Nahnah on Sunday in the town of Medea, 100 kms southwest of the capital Algiers. Nahnah who received in Medea a lukewarm welcome ahead of the November 16 elections, called again for the return to a "legitimate power" to put an end to the violence marring his country. — AFP/UNB photo