

International

**BRIEFLY**

**Haitian MP shot dead:** A Member of Haiti's parliament was shot dead and another was seriously injured on Tuesday in an attack in a residential neighbourhood of Port-Au-Prince, parliamentary sources said. Reuter reports from Port-Au-Prince.

The slain politician Jean Hubert Feuille who died of a bullet wound to the head was a cousin of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and had served in Aristide's security force. He represented the southern town of Port Salut.

**Fighting leaves 10 dead in Somalia:** At least 10 people have been killed and more than 15 wounded in heavy fighting between militiamen of General Mohammed Farah Aidid and fighters of the rival Rahnwein Resistance Army (RRA) in Baldoa in southwest Somalia, reports said Tuesday, AFP reports from Mogadishu.

The fighting late Monday started when the RRA fighters launched an attack on Baldoa airport and temporarily wrested it from militiamen of Aidid's United Somali Congress/Somali National Alliance (USC/SNA) faction.

**2 dissidents jailed in Vietnam:** Vietnam jailed two veteran communist dissidents yesterday on charges of acting against the interests of the state, an official at the supreme court in Hanoi said. Reuter says from Hanoi.

Hoang Minh Chinh, 76, and Do Trung Hieu, 57, were jailed for 12 months and 15 months respectively, the official said. Both men had pleaded innocent of any wrong doing during the one-day trial, according to a witness at the hearing.

**Quake hits Sumatra Island:** An earthquake measuring 6.5 on the Richter scale was recorded off the Indonesian island of Sumatra yesterday but there were no immediate reports of casualties, officials said. Reuter reports from Jakarta.

A Jakarta-based official at the meteorology and geophysics agency said the earthquake struck at 2.14 pm (0714 GMT), 170 km (110 miles) northwest of Gunung Sitoli, the main town on Nias Island off the north Sumatran coast.

**46 Mauritians charged with spying:** Forty six Mauritians were charged Tuesday with spying for a foreign power and belonging to a secret organisation following the reported smashing of an Iraqi spy ring a justice official said, AFP reports from Nouakchott.

A total of 18 other members of groups sympathetic to Baghdad's ruling Baath Party were released during the day, and the future of ten more arrested in a swoop last month was still uncertain.

**Clinton meets King Hussein:** US President Bill Clinton met Jordan's King Hussein in Jerusalem on Monday and voiced hopes that the stalemate in the talks between Israel and Syria would be overcome, a Jordanian official said, AFP reports from Jerusalem.

Clinton was hopeful that there will be progress on the Syrian track, the official said as King to remain anonymous.

**First woman PM in Haiti sworn in:** Claudette Wereligh was sworn in as Haiti's first woman Prime Minister on Tuesday, hours after gunmen shot and killed a Member of Parliament and his deputy. Reuter reports from Port-au-Prince.

"I tell the people who count on me, I count on you too," said Wereligh, who was inaugurated with her new cabinet at a palace ceremony.



Women wave portraits of Stalin as they cheer Gennady Zuzanov, leader of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, as some 10,000 people took to the streets of Moscow on Tuesday marking the 78th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. With the communists heading opinion polls, fears are growing that Russia will next month vote for a communist-dominated parliament which will try to turn the clocks back to Soviet times. — AFP/UNB photo

**Powell to decide on Republican nomination soon**

WASHINGTON, Nov 8: Retired General Colin Powell will announce whether or not he will run for the Republican presidential nomination before the end of this week, a close associate told Reuters on Tuesday.

The associate who asked not to be named said I feel it will come before Friday. Gen Powell will make a personal announcement in public before that time.

The associate did not say what Powell's decision would be. Powell, the first black to head the US armed forces as chairman of the joint chiefs of staff went into seclusion last month after concluding a triumphal tour to promote his autobiography.

**Israeli government pushing ahead with ME peace moves**

JERUSALEM, Nov 8: Israel's government is pushing ahead with peace moves despite a bitter domestic debate that was halted only briefly for the funeral of slain Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, reports Reuter.

Signs of national unity following Rabin's assassination at a peace rally on Saturday have given way to expressions of hate and mutual accusations over the murder.

Keen to reassure the world that Rabin's assassin, law student Yigal Amir, had not also killed Middle East peace, acting Prime Minister Shimon Peres told reporters on Tuesday: "I shall continue the process of peace that we have started." But some government op-

**BJP against Rao's offer for more autonomy in Kashmir**

NEW DELHI, Nov 8: India's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) said on Tuesday it would launch a nationwide campaign against the Prime Minister's weekend offer of more autonomy for the troubled state of Jammu and Kashmir, reports Reuter.

The party, beginning a meeting of its national executive in the western city of Pune, passed a resolution denouncing Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's decision, part of a set of measures aimed at holding elections in Kashmir in December.

The BJP, India's main opposition party, particularly criticised Rao's offer to allow the state's head of government to be renamed "wazir-e-azam" (Urdu for prime minister), and the state governor *sadr-e-riyasat* (head of state).

"This is a very dangerous

proposition with far-reaching consequences for the north-eastern parts of the country as well," the United News of India (UNI) agency quoted the resolution as saying.

Rao's Congress Party has welcomed his autonomy package, aimed at reviving democracy in the state through the proposed December assembly elections.

The pro-Indian National Conference, the main regional party in Kashmir, has said it does not go far enough.

An earlier report says, Pakistani Foreign Minister Assef Ahmad Ali on Monday condemned as a farce India's plan to hold elections next month in the two-thirds of Kashmir it controls.

"Under the circumstances, the decision to go ahead with the farcical polls in the disputed territory would be totally ill-advised,"

Ali said in a statement. "It would only aggravate the tensions in the entire region."

Indian Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's cabinet decided at the weekend to hold the first assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir since 1987. The federal government has exercised direct rule over the mostly Muslim northern state since the outbreak in 1990 of a rebellion in which more than 20,000 people have died.

"The struggle of the people of Kashmir has not been waged to participate in elections or to seek greater autonomy under the Indian constitution," the Pakistani Foreign Minister said.

He was referring to Rao's pledge on Saturday to strengthen autonomy in the disputed Himalayan region.

"If the government of India proceeds with the mock elections, despite clear evi-

dence of its total popular rejection, it would only lead to the intensification of the struggle of the people of Kashmir against Indian forces," Ali said.

Reuter adds: India's election chiefs arrive in Jammu and Kashmir state today to decide whether to accept the federal government's controversial recommendation to hold polls next month in the rebellious Himalayan region.

The decision by Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's cabinet on the weekend in favour of organising the first state assembly elections in eight years has been criticised by national opposition parties and a broad spectrum of Kashmiris.

Separatists called a one-day protest strike for today in the Kashmir valley, the centre of a five-year-old revolt against Indian rule

**Benazir assures Iran Pakistan won't support any faction of Afghans**

TEHRAN, Nov 8: Pakistan's Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto moved to assure Iran on Tuesday about her country's aims in Afghanistan, saying Islamabad did not support an Afghan faction seen in Tehran as pro-American, reports Reuter.

"Pakistan has decided not to give financial or military support to any faction of the Afghans," Benazir, quoted by Ettelaat newspaper, told the Iranian parliament.

Iranian media have widely accused Islamabad of organising and backing the Taleban Islamic movement seen in Tehran as financed by Saudi Arabia and serving United States interests.

"Only a madman ready to commit suicide would think of meddling in Afghanistan under the present circumstances," said Benazir, para-

phrasing a statement by Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

But she reiterated: "we believe the time has come to end for the Kabul government."

Pakistan agreed with Iran about the need for a political solution in Afghanistan, including power-sharing by the various Mujahideen factions, she said.

"We consider Iran a friend, a neighbour, a brother in Islam," said Benazir, quoted by the Iranian News Agency IRNA.

"Neither the leadership, the governments, the peoples nor the elected representatives of Iran and Pakistan can dream of the day when we would be rivals or compete with each other," she said.

**Rwandan troops attack Hutu rebel base, 146 killed**

KIGALI, Nov 8: One hundred and forty-one Hutu rebels and five Rwandan soldiers were killed when Rwandan forces launched a surprise attack on a Hutu rebel base near the border with Zaire, the UN radio service reported here Tuesday, reports AFP.

Rwandan troops using amphibious vehicles attacked the base on Twawa island in lake Kivun near the Zairean border overnight Sunday said the radio run by the UN assistance mission in Rwanda.

There was ferocious fighting in the ensuing confrontation with the rebels former soldiers in the national army overthrown in a civil war last year, the radio report added. Citing Colonel Charles Noga of the Rwandan Popular Army (RPA).

**Sri Lanka blasts Ghali's concern over Tamils**

COLOMBO, Nov 8: Sri Lanka on Tuesday criticised UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali for voicing concern over an exodus of thousands of Tamil civilians fleeing an army offensive in the north, reports AFP.

Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar told Boutros-Ghali in a letter that Colombo was "dismayed to see his statement" in New York last week in which he expressed "deep concern," over the civilians' flight from the Jaffna peninsula.

The contents... appear to derive from conclusions arrived at without ascertaining the full facts of a complex internal situation," the minister said in his letter, from which the government released excerpts.

**'Vietnam conflict should be a lesson for humanity'**

HANOI, Nov 8: Former US Defence Secretary Robert McNamara, visiting Hanoi for the first time since the end of the Vietnam war, said the conflict in which he played a key role should be a lesson for humanity in the next millennium, reports AFP.

McNamara, 79, spent almost three hours talking to students and experts at Hanoi's Institute of International Relations.

"We have to draw the lessons of the Vietnam war to avoid other wars in the next century," a Vietnamese source quoted him as saying in translation.

Washington had been wrong to think it could prevent the communists' victory and "underestimated the fighting spirit" of the Vietnamese people, McNamara reportedly said.



Famous cook Keith Floyd waiting on five of the 1995 Miss World contestants, from left, Michelle Khan from Trinidad, Diana Figueroa (Colombia), Anica Martinovic from Croatia, Melissa Porta from Australia and Sarah Brady from New Zealand in South Africa at the Valley of Waves at Sun City on Monday, before Miss World finals to be held November 18. — AFP/UNB photo

**China to begin trial production of new weapons**

BEIJING, Nov 8: China is ready to begin trial production of new weapons developed as part of a military modernisation programme that has already fuelled concerns among its regional neighbours, reports AFP.

The new weaponry, designed over the past five years, includes a main battle tank, self-propelled anti-aircraft guns, anti-tank guided missiles and self-propelled cannon, the Xinhua News Agency said Tuesday.

"Thus far, most designs are off the drawing-board and ready for trial production," Xinhua said, citing a military officer attending a recent national conference of science and technology in the arms industry.

"When Chinese troops are equipped with the new weapons, the technical level of China's conventional weapons will be greatly improved," the unnamed officer said.

**US to resume diplomatic contacts with PLO**

WASHINGTON, Nov 8: The US house of Representatives on Tuesday approved a bill allowing aid to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and for diplomatic contacts to resume, reports Reuter.

The bill renews until December 31 the President's earlier authority to waive restrictions against the PLO that had expired at midnight last Tuesday.

The restrictions would have halted action on aid for the Palestinian authority governing parts of the West Bank and forced the State Department to ask the PLO to close its Washington office.

ern assertions that China poses a major military threat.

Pointing out that China's defence spending was only a fraction of that of the United States, the article accused western countries of reviving the concept of a "China threat" to stir up trouble between Beijing and other Asian governments.

On Tuesday, the same newspaper announced that China would invest 360 billion yuan (43.4 billion dollars) over the next five years in building a telecommunications network to meet any eventuality of war in its border areas or coastal fronts.

Work will focus on constructing a network with "combat readiness," which takes satellite communications as the main body and emergency devices such as mobile satellite ground receivers, digital micro wave and programme-controlled switching systems, as supplements.

**Off the Record**

**The 'bold' and the 'beauties'**

PRETORIA: President Nelson Mandela on Tuesday wound up smeared in lipstick after greeting the 86 candidates to the 1995 Miss World contest one by one, but managed to give the encounter a political touch, reports AFP.

Dressed in a brightly-coloured African shirt, Mandela offered his condolences to Miss Israel over the slaying of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin before shaking the hand of the red-head, dressed in slinky black.

He expressed his hopes for a lasting peace to Miss Croatia, a 19-year-old wrapped in white.

The winner will be named on November 18 in South Africa's Sun City resort.

**Protest indeed**

WELLINGTON: Veteran New Zealand anti-royalist Sam Bracanov staged a symbolic protest against a visit by Queen Elizabeth Tuesday by spraying air-freshener as her motorcade sped past, reports Reuter.

Bracanov, 59, was arrested after trying to spray freshener at Prince Charles in Auckland last year and was ordered by police to pay NZ 9,000 dollar (US dollar 5,900) good behaviour bond to prevent him disrupting this month's visit by the Queen.

Bracanov, who says royalty stinks, settled for delivering his eccentric protest from a distance. He waited by the roadside and released the spray from an aerosol as the Queen drove past at speed en route to an Auckland racecourse.

A rarely-used New Zealand law allows district court judges to require a monetary bond from any person who threatens to commit offences which included assault, offensive acts and insulting language.

**Snakes kill 100,000 people each year!**

GENEVA: Snakes scorpions and other poisonous creepy crawlies kill more than 100,000 people each year worldwide, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said, reports AFP.

Around five million are bitten or stung by venomous creatures annually but the greatest proportion of the deaths occur in developing countries where many of the victims are farm workers who said in its latest weekly bulletin on epidemics.

In Asia alone snakes kill 30,000 people a year compared to 1,000 in Africa and South America. In wealthy countries on the other hand bites are rarely deadly some 45,000 people suffer snake-bites in the United States each year but only nine to 15 are killed in consequence. An average two of the 300 to 500 people bitten by snakes die each year in Australia.

In Mexico 300 of the 63,000 people bitten by snakes and scorpions die while around one per cent of Brazil's 8,000 scorpion bites prove deadly as do 1.5 per cent of the country's 20,000 snake bites.

**Iraq's biological, chemical weapons 'Important information' handed over: UN expert**

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 8: A UN expert investigating Iraqi weapons stockpiles said Tuesday that Baghdad had handed over new "important information" on biological and chemical weapons and would report on its missiles by the end of the month, reports AFP.

Rolf Ekeus, head of the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) set up after the 1991 Gulf War to make sure Iraq does not develop dangerous weapons, was reporting to the UN Security Council a day before the council conducted its regular sanctions review against Iraq.

The review takes place every two months, and western diplomats did not expect any easing of the sanctions during the Wednesday meeting despite the new information.

US officials have previously said that even if Iraq completely divulges all its information about past and present weapons programmes, the information would still take perhaps a year to verify.

Sanctions would not be lifted until Iraq is found in complete compliance with UN Security Council resolutions demanding it release all such information to investigators.

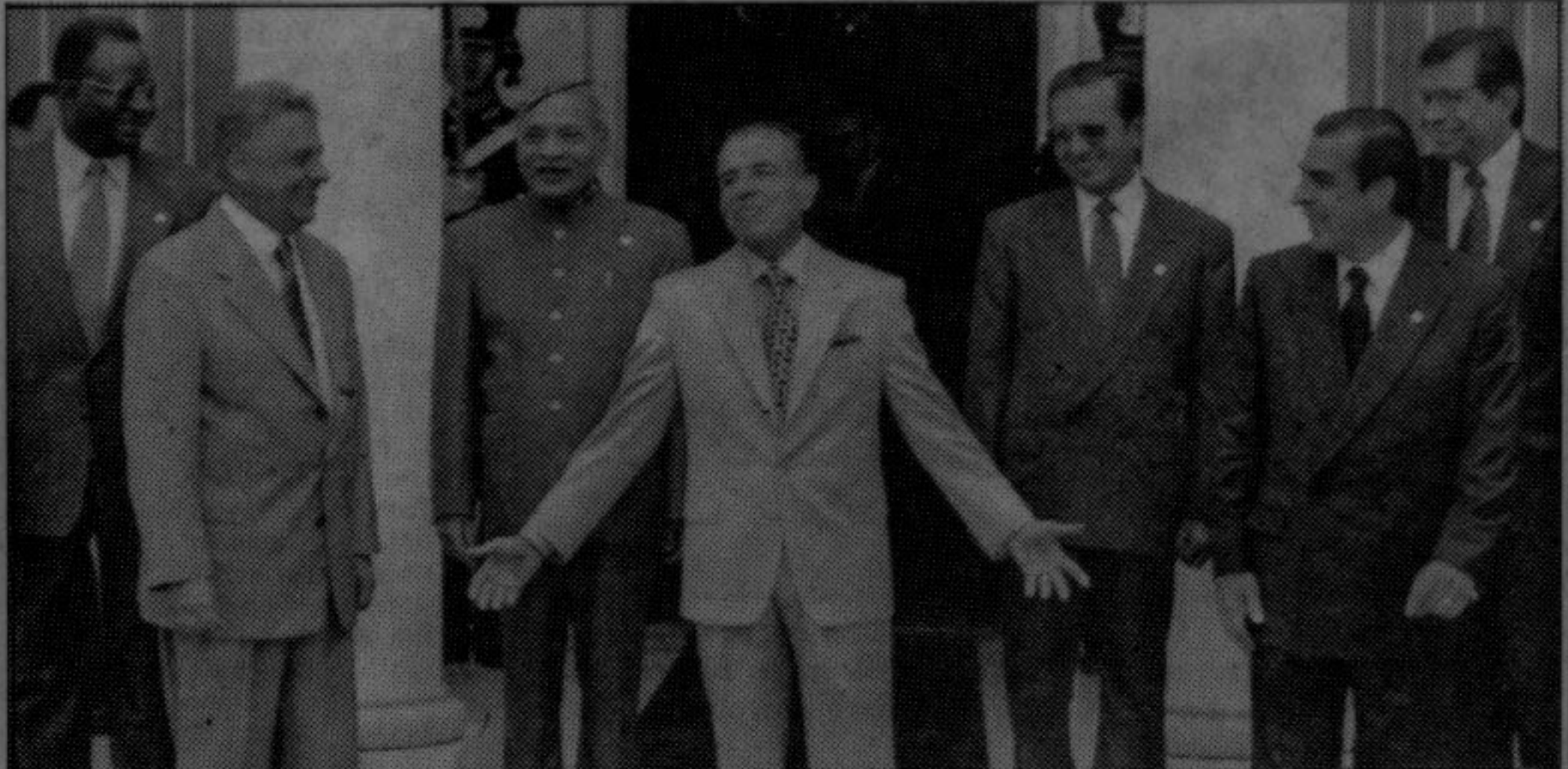
Baghdad had just delivered new reports on its biological and chemical weapons programme to UNSCOM over the weekend, Ekeus said.

"They contain important information," he said, saying their contents had yet to be analysed and verified which will take some time.

UNSCOM was awaiting "with great interest" for Iraq to hand over a third report on missile progress by the end of the month.

He said UNSCOM was currently prioritising a mass of documents released by Iraq in August following the defection of General Hussein Kamel, in order to verify the new reports.

Ekeus said in October that he feared Baghdad may still have the horrific chemical and biological warheads it developed before 1990.



Argentine President Carlos Menem (C) jokes with photographers on Tuesday during the group photo opportunity at the V Group of 15 Summit in Buenos Aires. (L-R) Senegalese Premier Habib Thiam, Brazilian President Fernando Cardoso, Indian Premier Narasimha Rao, Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo, Chilean President Eduardo Frei and Peruvian Vice President Ricardo Marquez. — AFP/UNB photo