

## BRIEFLY



Iraqis read newspapers commenting Friday the visit of United Nations Special Commission on Disarming Iraq (UNSCOM) chief Rolf Ekeus. UN experts said that they had completely destroyed Iraq's main germ warfare plant. A 20-member team of experts from the UNSCOM, which began its work in mid-May, "has finished dismantling the factory at Al-Hakam and is due to leave Iraq yesterday."

— AFP/UNB photo

### 11 die as bldg collapses in Brazil:

Eleven workers were killed after a building they were constructing in northern Brazil collapsed. Globo television reported Friday. Reuter reports from Brasilia.

A spokesman for the fire brigade in the city of Salvador could not confirm the number of victims. But on Thursday night, shortly after the accident, he told Reuter at least one person died and about 20 were still buried under the rubble after a grain silo under construction caved in.

### Slocombe to visit China:

US Under Secretary of Defence Walter Slocombe is going to China next week for what would be the highest-level visit by a Pentagon official since this year's war of nerves in the Taiwan Straits. AP reports from Washington.

Slocombe will visit China June 25-28 for talks with military and government officials on global and regional issues, as well as ~~state~~ military matters, the Pentagon said. The delegation is to include representatives of the Defense Department, State Department and National Security Council.

### Light plane crash kills 2 in China:

A light aircraft with three crew and nine passengers on board has crashed into a hillside in northeastern China, killing the pilot and co-pilot, airport officials said yesterday. Reuter reports from Beijing.

The Chinese-made Y-12 18-seater plane of Harbin Feilong airlines crashed on Friday afternoon while on a flight from the northeastern city of Dalian to the offshore island of Changsha, a Changsha airport official said. The co-pilot was killed and the pilot died later in hospital while eight others were seriously injured and two were slightly hurt, the Xinhua news agency said. None of the injured was in critical condition, it said.

**Gunmen kill 4 doctors in Burundi:** Gunmen killed four doctors on a humanitarian mission in Burundi and took another hostage, the director of their aid agency said Friday, AP reports from Brazzaville.

The attacks occurred Wednesday and June 7, but the Ivory Coast-based Doctors of the Tropics said it had only just learned of the killings. The central African country of Burundi is torn by fighting between the Hutsu majority and the Tutsi minority, and aid workers are frequently attacked to discourage them from helping victims of the ethnic violence.

### Guatemalan plane crash kills 2:

Two men died when a small airplane crashed on Friday into the fourth floor of a building in southern Guatemala City, radio reports said. Reuter reports from Guatemala.

The pilot and the co-pilot were killed, the reports said. The accident happened at 11 am (1300 EST) less than a mile (1.6 km) from Guatemala's Aurora International Airport. The cause was not immediately known.

### Myanmar seeks ASEAN membership:

Myanmar is seeking to become a full member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) within the next two years, newspaper reports said today. Reuter reports from Bangkok.

The reports quoted Sukham Rasmidatta, Director of General of the Thai Foreign Ministry's ASEAN department, as saying on Friday the Myanmar government had reaffirmed it wanted to be an ASEAN observer this year and had strongly indicated that it would seek ASEAN membership in 1998. It is the first time Yangon has offered a time frame for joining the association, which groups Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

### 9 Filipinos killed in bus crash:

Nine people, including a town mayor, were killed and 19 injured in a bus crash on Leyte Island in the central Philippines yesterday officials said. Reuter reports from Manila.

Police said Zosimo Bartolini, mayor of an isolated town on Leyte, 600 km (370 miles) south of Manila, was among those on a bus that plunged into a rice field after hitting a parked truck.

**Sinn Fein under renewed pressure to break with IRA violence**

DUBLIN, June 22: Sinn Fein was under renewed pressure to break with IRA violence on Saturday after Irish police uncovered an IRA arms factory where mortar bombs were being refurbished for the guerrillas' war on Britain, reports Reuter.

Irish Prime Minister John Bruton expressed outrage at the fact that the find was made at a time when the Irish Republican Army's political wing, Sinn Fein, was saying it was committed to peaceful means of ending British rule of Northern Ireland.

Opposition leader Mary Harney urged Bruton's government to break all links with Sinn Fein after the discovery of the bomb factory south of Dublin, and the IRA's bombing of the English city of Manchester last weekend.

### Norway sends envoy to protect Suu Kyi

OSLO, June 22: Norway sent a diplomat to Myanmar on Friday with the aim of protecting Nobel peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi from possible arrest by her country's military dictators, reports AP.

Suu Kyi, the 1991 Nobel peace laureate, spent six years under house arrest for leading a pro-democracy campaign. She was released in July, but the military government has cracking down on democracy activists again. She and thousands of her supporters have risked arrest by a defying a ban on all political activity by the rejuvenated democracy movement.

"We are very concerned about the situation. We are afraid that Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi could be arrested again," Deputy Foreign Minister Jan Egeiland said by telephone.

Egeiland said Norway had sent Charge d'Affaires Anna Thalmann from Norway's embassy in Singapore to the Burmese capital of Rangoon on Friday with instructions to remain with Suu Kyi as much as possible.

"We can't physically prevent an arrest. We sent a woman to protect a woman. But we can make an arrest more difficult," he said.

### Manila rejects MNLF proposal to set up regional police force

MANILA, June 22: The Philippine government today rejected demand by Muslim rebels to set up a regional police force composed of about 20,000 guerrillas to keep the peace in a proposed autonomy area in the southern Philippines, reports Reuter.

The insurgent Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) raised the demand on the second day of peace talks in southern Davao City aimed at ending a 24-year-old Muslim revolt. The rebels have been fighting for self-rule in the Mindanao region and adjacent areas.

Government negotiator Alexander Aquirre told reporters the MNLF proposal was "legally impossible" because it would violate the constitution which stipulated that the Philippines should have only one police organisation, national in scope and under the control of the Manila government.

### Fighting leaves 11 killed in Lanka

COLOMBO, June 22: Ten government soldiers and a Tamil rebel were killed in fighting in northern and eastern Sri Lanka, the military said Saturday, reports AP.

Four soldiers died when a jeep ran over a rebel landmine at Sathurukondawala village in eastern Batticaloa district on Saturday, said Col. Weeragama, a military spokesman.

The soldiers were being sent to assist a colleague who had been attacked by the rebels while on patrol, said Weeragama.

Two soldiers were also injured in the attack, about 210 kilometers (131 miles) east of the capital, Colombo.

On Friday, six soldiers were killed when the tractor they were travelling in ran over a rebel land mine at Killay village in the Jaffna Peninsula, said captain K.P.S. Premalal, a military spokesman.

The attacks occurred Wednesday and June 7, but the Ivory Coast-based Doctors of the Tropics said it had only just learned of the killings. The central African country of Burundi is torn by fighting between the Hutsu majority and the Tutsi minority, and aid workers are frequently attacked to discourage them from helping victims of the ethnic violence.

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## Women's right in Pakistan: A tussle between extremists & liberals

The case, now being heard by the Lahore High Court, has become a test case for the rights and freedom of movement of Pakistani women.

"I had decided that I would leave my father's house, but when I accidentally found out that the date for my nikah (Muslim marriage contract) had been arranged for that weekend, I knew I had to escape because I was already married," she said.

But she had underestimated the extent of her father's anger. Abdulwahed, a leader of the very conservative Muslim sect Ahle Hadees, beat and locked up his daughter, starved her and forced her to put her signature on some documents, reports IPS.

Her story hit the front pages of newspapers in April when she escaped from home on hearing that her family had arranged her marriage to a wealthy doctor, having forced her husband to sign at gunpoint a statement freeing her from the marriage contract.

The subsequent confrontation between father and daughter has brought to the fore the long-running albeit silent tussle in Pakistan between the views of the extreme right and liberals. It has exposed the clash of old and new values in a

traditional society which is slowly changing particularly in the urban areas.

The case is particularly significant because it brings up the issue of the liberty and freedom of movement of Pakistani women in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, declares Jahangir, one of Pakistan's best known lawyers.

Under Pakistan's constitution an adult female (above 18 years) of sound mind can make her own decisions, a right guaranteed even by Islamic law which says a person who reaches puberty is to be considered an adult.

But Saima's father has challenged her marriage on the grounds that the Ahle Hadees, the sect of Islam he adheres to, does not allow a girl to marry unless her wali (guardian) is present and consenting — nor can a woman, even if she is legally an adult, leave her father's custody until she has been married off by the father — to a Muslim

man even if she is 60 years old.

The Ahle Hadees sect believes the father "is duty bound to maintain and protect a daughter until he has contracted and participated in her nikah. If he fails in this duty, he will be committing a grave sin, for which he will be punished in the hereafter."

In the ensuing debate in court, the issue of Saima's marriage has become secondary to the larger concern of the right of adult Pakistani women to decide how they choose to live their lives.

Saima's lawyers argued with various Islamic and constitutional law cases according to which a woman can legally be her own wali, are pleading that the validity of her marriage should be decided first, because if it is deemed legal there can be no further dispute on the right of Pakistani women to choose.

The case is being followed with tremendous interest

across Pakistan. Ropri moved the Lahore High Court in mid-April to secure the release of his daughter from Jahangir's custody. Saima was then staying at an Ahle Hadees-run shelter for women.

The prosecution won an order from Justice Ihsanul Haq Chowdhury transferring Saima to the Darulaman, another shelter for women in Lahore which works like a sub-jail, where her parents would be free to meet her whenever they pleased.

A bailiff and a police team went with Ropri and other members of his family, some of them armed, to the Ahle Hadees office (where Saima had come to meet an uncle) on the afternoon of April 18 to implement the order.

What followed was pure drama. When Saima refused to go with them, Ropri and his relatives tried to physically drag her away, despite the protests of the police and the bailiff.

That is very wrong," said a policewoman who accompanied Saima to court. Islam gives a woman the right to choose her own husband.

## Gaddafi flies directly to Cairo for Arab summit violating UN air ban

CAIRO, June 22: Libyan leader Moammar Gaddafi arrived in Cairo Saturday for the Arab summit aboard a Libyan airliner that flew directly from his own country in violation of UN sanctions, reports AP.

Gaddafi's Libyan Airlines plane flew from the town of Massa near the Egyptian border, officials at the border said, speaking on condition of anonymity. Egypt's Middle East News Agency and Libyan reporters also said Gaddafi flew directly from Libya.

The last minute arrival was typical of the maverick Gaddafi, who left officials wondering whether he was coming or not. Wearing a satin silver vest, white trousers and a flowing white Libyan cloak, he was given a state welcome by President Hosni Mubarak.

Gaddafi, who also wore sunglasses and a brown turban, chatted amiably with Mubarak and put his arm around the Egyptian president's back as the two walked away from the white Libyan airliner together.

The Egyptian news agency said Gaddafi decided to come at the last minute and therefore had no choice but to fly from Libya. But the officials at the border told Egypt on Friday night that he would attend.

Gaddafi was the last of the 13 Arab heads of state arriving for the Arab summit. Six other Arab states and the PLO are also represented, but Iraq was not invited to the gathering.

The Security Council put diplomatic sanctions in Libya in 1992 to pressure it to hand over two Libyans. They are wanted in the 1988 bombing of an American jet over Lockerbie, Scotland, which killed 270 people.

Western countries oppose the tradition of geographic favoritism in selecting the secretary-general.

China will ensure that no one unacceptable to developing countries wins approval in the Security Council, which nominates a candidate, or in the 185-member General Assembly, which ratifies the choice.

The White House has announced that it opposes the 73-year-old Egyptian diplomat and will use its Security Council veto if necessary to prevent a second term when his current five-year appointment expires December 31.

As one of the five permanent members, China has a veto to along with Russia, France and Britain. The 15-member council will probably begin the formal selection process in November.

If Boutros-Ghali carries

through with his pledge to run, the United States would probably veto him in the first round — and China would probably veto all Western-backed candidates.

Western countries oppose the tradition of geographic favoritism in selecting the secretary-general. But developing countries strongly believe that a secretary general from the Third World is necessary to counterbalance the power of the Security Council, dominated by Americans and Europeans.

Reuter adds: United Nations Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, determined to win a second term of office despite the opposition of the United States, said in a newspaper interview that he wanted to complete the task of UN reform.

The US says it will use its veto to prevent the election of the 73-year-old Egyptian for another five years, accusing him of failing to cut the United Nations' vast bureaucracy.

COLOMBO: A 36-year-old Sri Lankan man who married 54 women within five years and stole their cash and jewellery has been arrested on charges of bigamy, a state-run daily reported Tuesday, reports AP.

The man was arrested by police at the southern town of Rakwana and remanded pending further investigation, the daily news said, adding that preliminary inquiries showed the man had used 32 different names during his marriage binges.

## Off the Record

### He marries for cheating

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Organisers hope the festival will attract up to 35,000 participants. Events include concerts, art exhibits, and hearings in the Danish parliament.

Festival spokesman Michael Nord said he hopes Europride will become a Woodstock-like gathering of gays and lesbians.

"We do it to make gays and lesbians visible and to show that there are many of us and that we are different. We want to combat prejudice, which for example holds that gays have loose wrists and lesbians are big and macho," Nord said.

Europride is to culminate June 29 with a large parade including drag queens and floats.

The festival is timed to coincide with the June 27 anniversary of the Stonewall uprising in New York City in 1969. The clash between police and homosexuals after a raid on a gay bar is seen as a galvanizing event in the gay-rights movement.

Previous Europride festivals were held in London, Berlin and Amsterdam.

### Di not interested

LONDON: Disney World was reported Sunday to have offered Princess Diana 5.3 million pounds (US \$8.2 million) to star in its 25th birthday celebrations, but Diana's spokeswoman said she doesn't accept paid invitations, reports AP.