pledge to hold polls

Kashmir, India's only Mus-

lim-majority state where a

Muslim separatist campaign

has left more than 12,000

people dead since 1989, has

come under New Delhi's direct

elections in 1987 were marred

by allegations of fraud. Kashmir

held parliamentary polls in

May for the first time since

in the parliamentary elections

and a decline in militancy

proved most Kashmiris were

tired of violence and wanted a

The Freedom Conference's

The government is projec-

ting that a lot of improvement

has taken place in Kashmir,"

he said. "If this was true, there

should have been a reduction

in the number of Indian troops

New Delhi says the turnout

The last state assembly

rule since January 1990.

1989 to fill its six seats.

democratic alternative.

lone challenged this.

BRIFFIY

Fahd, Chirac discuss ME peace: Saudi King Fahd and visiting French President Jacques Chirac held wide-ranging talks into the early hours of yesterday on the Middle East peace process and prospects for developing Franco-Saudi ties, AFP reports from Jeddah.

French officials said the talks which went on for 85 minutes had been exceptionally long. The two leaders had a 10-minute private before being joined by their respective defence, interior and foreign ministers.

7 Hutus killed in Bujumbura: Western aid workers said on Saturday at least seven Hutus

were killed three days after the massacre of more than 80 Tutsis by Hutu rebels as protests in the capital by the minority Tutsis fanned ethnic tension, Reuter reports from Bujumbura.

Western aid workers and missionaries who asked not to be named said soldiers from the Tutsi-dominated army were seen going to the area - overlooking the Kamenge site north of Bujumbura where the seven Hutus were killed and five others wounded.

Plane crash claims two in US: At least two people were killed and several others were hurt

Saturday when a Delta airlines flight aborted its take off from the Pensacola Florida airport, officials said. AFP reports from Washington.

Delta flight 1288 to Atlanta Georgia was transporting 142 passengers and five crew according to a federal aviation administration spokeswoman. Unconfirmed reports said the aborted take-off could have been caused by a fire in one of the MD-88's engines.

Mugabe arrives in Cairo: President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe arrived late Saturday in Cairo for talks with his counterpart Hosni Mubarak on "strengthening bilateral political and economic ties." Egyptian officials said. WP reports from Cairo.

Mugabe, who will spend 48 hours in Egypt, will also go r matters to be discussed at the Organisation of African ty summit Monday in Yaounde, as well as discussing onal and international topics of mutual interest," the SOUIT

rm claims 7 in Mexico: A violent hat lashed Acapulco early Saturday left seven people storm t ir injured and hundreds homeless. Guerrero state's dead, for Angel Aguirre told the official news agency Notimex. governor s from Acapulco. AFP report

o and surrounding areas were whipped this week Acapulo . Boris, and Saturday's storm brought the number by hurrican. le left homeless by the rough weather to 8,500. of local peop that the storms had done about four million Aguirre said age to homes farms and the fishing industry. dollars in dam

ng kills two in Alps: Lightning Lightnin buntain climbers in the Alps Saturday, killing hit a group of me six others, police said, AP reports from two and injuring

Garmish Partenkh ne, all from the Straubing area in Bavaria. The group of nh 2,628 me tre (8,622 foot) Alpspitze when were climbing the a thung'erstorm around midday, police they were caught in ed up by a mountain rescue team from said. They were pick e area by charace on a film project. Munich that was in th

Russia he ading for new showdown with Chechens by breaking promise

Lanka tapping phonies of

foreign corresponde nits,

GROZNY, Russia, July 7: The Russian government appeared headed for a new showdown with Chechen rebels by breaking a promise made at peace talks launched during President Boris Yeltsin's reelection campaign, reports

Reuter. Some separatist commanders, describing Yeltsin's peace initiative as a pre-election farce, vowed to resume hostilities unless the Russian Army removed checkpoints

and roadblocks in Chechnya by Sunday as agreed last month. But Russian negotiators, ending a 10-day trip to the rebel region on Thursday, strongly implied before they left that the roadblocks would stay, re-

gardless of the agreement. The Russian military leadership justifies the checkpoints by accusing rebels of staging sporadic attacks against troops, but local people say

COLOMBO, July 7: Sri Lan-

ka's main intelligence agency

is tapping the phones of

foreign correspondents and

local journalists, a pro-gov-

ernment weekly said today,

officials working for state-

owned radio, television and

newspapers were tapped by

the National Intelligence

Bureau (NIB), the Yuktiya, or

Justice, newspaper said.

It said telephone lines of

the offices of AFP and Reuters

news agencies and phones of

six Indian journalists had been

bugged. Phones of a few gov-

ernment and opposition politi-

cians had also been tapped.

keeps silent about such tactics.

that phone tapping is used by

the government even though

Officially, the government

But officials privately admit

Telephone conversations of

reports AFP.

the paper said.

the army is using the posts to har; iss them or extract bribes

As far as we know we'll still b e liere tomorrow", said a rul ty Interior Ministry soldie rat one of the roadblocks. "We ' have no orders to leave."

he removal of the posts one of the main demands of the rebels before they t up to the June agreewhich clearly benefitted by bringing a crucial he ugly-19-month conring his re-election

Many c f those who backed Yeltsin no w expect him and his newly-i appointed security supremo, Al exander Lebed, to take decisive measures to bring peace to Chechnya, where more the nan 30,000 people have been killed since December 1994

"The Indian government

should understand that we are

not for elections," added Abdul

Gani Lone, another leader of

the Freedom Conference, he

refuted New Delhi's claim that

the Himalayan state was ready

for elections after years of

eigh, hours in the Kashmir val-

ley on Saturday, becoming the

first indian prime minister to

visit the strife-torn region in

eas, went to a military hospital,

held talks with Kashmir offi-

cials and mainstream politi-

cians and said New Delhi was

ready to I sold elections to pick

meeting soon to discuss polls

dates. India n officials said the

elections were likely in Sep-

He said he would convene a

a new Kas, hmir legislature.

tember or October.

He toured flood ravaged ar-

Deve Gowda, 63, spent

bloodshed.

10 year's.

US First Lady Hillary Clinton with Hungarian Prime Minister Gyula Horn during their meeting at the parliament building on Saturday. Mrs Clinton is on a three-day non-official - AFP UNB photo visit to Hungary.

Exhumations of mass graves in Srebrenica begin

US forces confront Serb tanks outside Mladic's strong hold

HAN PIJESAK, Bosnia-Herzegovina, July 7 US soldiers confronted Bosnian Serb tanks outside the stronghold of war crimes suspect Gen. Ratko Mladic on Saturday, compelling the Serbs to pull back from a defiant show of force, reports AP.

SRINAGAR, India, July 7

Muslim separatist leaders to-

day denounced Indian Prime

Minister H D Deve Gowda's

pledge to hold legislative elec-

tions in Kashmir and vowed to

Three prominent leaders of

pursue the independence stru-

the separatist drive said Deve

Gowda's announcement during

a special visit on Saturday was

the spirit of elections, but

people have no interest in

polls for the sake of constitut-

ing a government," said Umer

Farooq, Kashmir's chief Mus-

of the United Nations to solve

the Kashmir dispute, said Fa-

roog, who also heads the Free-

dom Conference, which groups

many Muslim militant and po-

We want the intervention

"Kashmiris are not against

not acceptable in any way.

ggle, reports AFP.

lim priest.

litical groups.

Bosnian Serbs pounded US troops vehicles when they entered Mladic's military compound, shouting "Americans, go home!" and " We won't give up Mladic!" The heavily armed confrontation at the Bosnian Serb general's compound ended without shots or injuries. but was one of the tensest yet for US troops in Bosnia.

The NATO-led forces in the Han Pijesak area — mostly US soldiers - spotted the tanks and armour outside Mladic's compound Friday, and went on alert when the vehicles failed to move away by midday Satur-

The NATO force demanded that the tanks and armoured personnel carriers return to a containment zone where they are to be kept under the Dayton peace agreement. The Bosnian Serbs responded by asking the peace force to leave.

day, Capt. Mark Van Dyke said.

Three Bradley fighting vehicles and about 20 Hunvees were seen near the village of Han Pijesak, 30 miles (48 kilometres) northeast of Sarajevo, and several A-10 bomber jets circled overhead. About 30 US troops could be seen setting up a communications post at Han Pogled plateau over-

looking the town . When British officer entered Mladic's compound to negotiate, up to 200 Bosnian Serbs mobbed his escort of US troops, cursing, waving Serb flags and pounding on the

had blocked roads to the village to prevent the US troops from advancing.

While Van Dyke later denied there had been a standoff, the two sides appeared to be at an impasse until Saturday evening, when the vehicles, were confirmed to have been returned to storage.

Exhuming the mass graves containing thousands of bodies is part of an effort by war crimes prosecutors to build cases against genocide suspects such as Bosnian Serb Leader Radovan Karadzic and his military commander Gen. Ratko Mladic.

The three-month effort aims to "expose the entire grave," John Gerns, an American forensic specialist and spokesman for the war crimes investigators, said Saturday of the various burial sites.

We have decided to support the Erbakan government serious alternative emerges by Monday, Recepp Kiris, the deputy leader of the

reported, says AFP.

BBP Grand Union Party told The vote of the BBP's seven deputies could be crucial on Monday for the coalition set up by Erbakan's Welfare Party (Rifah) and the True Path Party (DYP) of former prime minis-

in Kashmir. But where is the

Jammu and Kashmir Liberation

Front (JKLF), the premier sep-

aratist group: "Our struggle

cannot be crushed by guns. Our

struggle will continue, elec-

2,0'00 to 3,000 Muslim gueril-

las are still active in Kashmir.

But the number of militants-

turne-d-renegades has swollen

to a whopping 6,000, seriously denting militancy.

as they are called are divided

in four major groups, report-

edly enjoy close ties with in-

dian security forces, and have

taken over large areas which

Kashmir are, however, all for

New Turkish govt

receives crucial

pledge of support

Islamic party leader Nemettin

Erbakan, has received a crucial

pledge of support for Mondays

vote of confidence in Parlia-

ment from an Islami c national-

ist party with just a handful of

seats the Ahatolia news agency

ANKARA, July 7: The Turkish coalition government of the

"Mainst ream politicians in

were once militant bastions.

elections

The "counter-insurgents."

The police say an estimated

tions or no elections."

Added Javed Mir of the

normalcy?"

ter Tansu Ciller. The coalition parties hold a total of 285 seats out of 5:50, 158 for Rifah and 127 for the DYP. However 17 DYP me.mbers are against the coalition with the Islamic party and four more are undecided.

Rabin's assassin appeals against his conviction

JERUSALEM, July 7: Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's assassin Yigal Amir appealed against his conviction in Israel's Supreme Court today, reports

Amir, a religious Jews who admitted shooting the Israeli leader at a peace rally last November, arrived at the Jerusalem courthouse under

heavy security, witnesses said. Amir's lawyers say evidence suggests another gunman was involved.

"There are too many questions unresolved, too many contradictions relating to the shooting that were not settled in the (lower) court," attorney Gabi Shahar told Reuters ahead of the hearing before a three-

judge court. A Tel Aviv court sentenced Amir in March to life in prison for murdering Rabin and wounding his bodyguard on November 4. Amir, a 26-yearold former law student, said he shot Rabin to prevent Israel from handing over land to Palestinian self-rule authority but insisted he only meant to paralyse the prime minister.

Mandela to retire in '99

LONDON, July 7: South African President Nelson Mandela is to retire when his present mandate expires in 1999. the BBC reported, citing an interview that it is to broadcast early today, reports AFP.

Mandela, who will be 81 when he retires, named Thabo Mbeki, his Vice-President, to succeed him as head of the African National Congress, the BBC said.

In a short extract broadcast late Saturday, Mandela described Mbeki as "very talented and very popular".

If the ANC elected him, Mandela said, "I would feel that they would have made the correct decision.

A Mandela spokesman in Johannesburg noted that South Africa had "No constitutional provisions for the handover of power" by a President to his Vice-President.

The ANC would elect a successor to Mandela and a new presidential election would be called, the spokesman said.

election's first round, 46-year-

old Alexander Lebed, into his

camp. Yeltsin treated Lebed

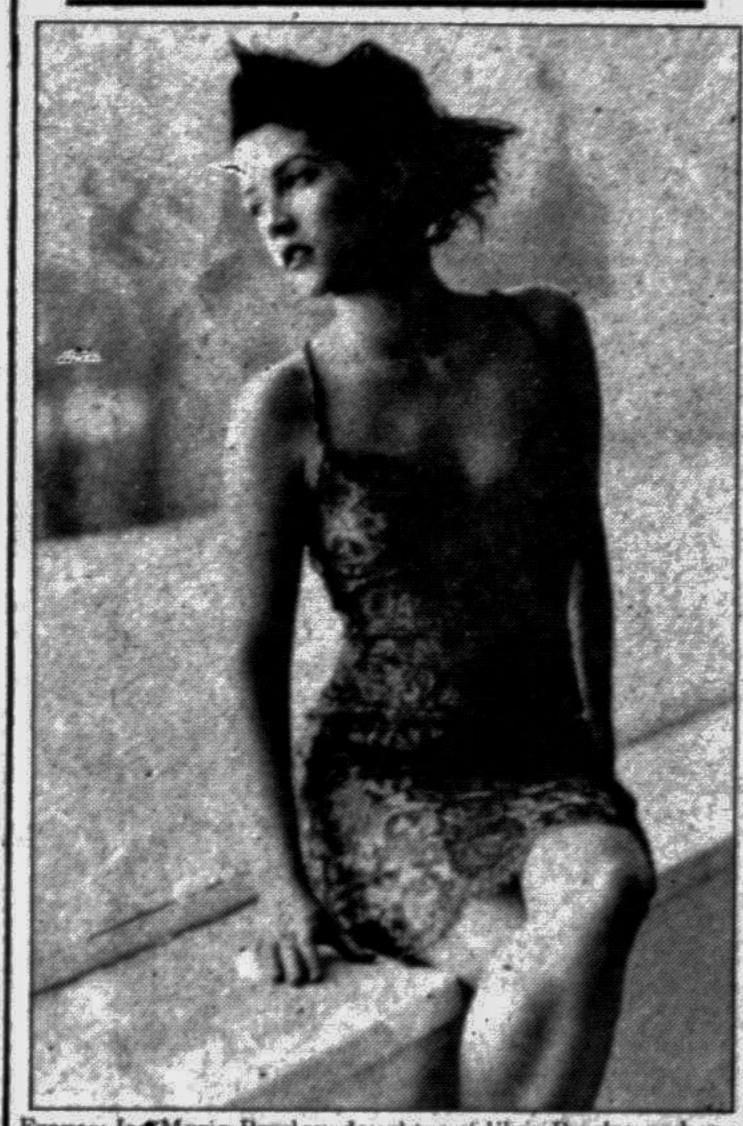
like his political heir, even

hinting Lebed might be Rus-

Lebed alarmed foreign gov-

ernments with his muscular

Kashmiris denounce Gowda's Offthe Record



France: Isa Maria Presley, daughter of Elvis Presley and exwife of Michael Jackson, previews a short dress in chocolate lace for Italian designer Gianni Versace's high-fashion autumn/winter 1996-1997 collection shown in Paris July 6 opening fashfon week through Wednesday.

— AFP/UNB photo

Victim of own crime MAYS LANDING. New Jersey: Donald Sprague had a great

excuse for missing the court date for his sentencing in a car theft case: His own car had just been stolen, reports AP. He would have been sentenced but for the fact that he was the victim of his own crime, said prosecutor Joel Mayer. "It's

The 24-year-old was to be sentenced Friday for taking a joyride in a stolen pizza delivery car last year in Atlantic City. But Sprague called the courthouse Friday morning to tell Superior Cort Jodge Robert Neustadter his car had been

The judge was understanding. He gave Sprague a new sentencing date next Friday.

Cruise comes to the rescue in real life

LONDON: Movie hero Tom Cruise came to the rescue in real life, reports AP. Arriving at a theater for the British premiere of Mission. Impossible. Cruise spied a small boy caught in the crush of

the crowd outside. Unable to move a barrier and free the gasping boy, he alerted nearby police who helped pull the child to safety, newspapers reported.

Cruise then comforted the frightened 7-year-old, Laurence Sadler, giving him an autograph after he caught his breath.
"I chatted to him for a while. I guess I made his night

Because Brazilians like sex

more exciting". Cruise told The Sun.

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil: It seems that Brazilians can't get enough of Divine Brown, the Hollywood prostitute caught in compromising position with Hugh Grant, report AP. Since arriving here last Monday, Brown - whose real name

is Estella Maria Thompson - has graced the covers of most major news dailies, appeared in a lingerie ad and posed for an

She also put in a much talked-about appearance on a late-

When the host, Jo Soares, asked Brown why she came to Brazil, she said it was because she heard Brazilians like sex. Brown, in town to promote her new X-reted film, "Sunset

and Devine," has been charging up to 2,000 dlrs for an interview during her stay. Grant, the star of "four Weddings and a Funeral", and

Brown where arrested last summer in Los Angeles by vice squad officers who spotted them in the actor's white BMW.

Tight security at US facilities in Pakistan amid 'specific threat'

ISLAMABAD, July 7: Security has been stepped up at American facilities in Pakistan following "a specific threat" of violence against US interests here, a US embassy official said Sunday, reports AP

Coming as it does in the wake of last month's deadly bombing in Saudi Arabia that left 19 Americans dead and hundreds more wounded. US Ambassador to Pakistan Thomas Simons said additional security seemed "only pru-

The embassy didn't give details of the threat or say what form the stepped up security has taken.

However, it seems that vehicles entering the US Embassy compound are being more rigorously searched. sometimes subjected to two

examinations. That became clear following

Chairman Wasim Sajjad, refused to attend after guards tried to search his vehicle a second time. Since then newspaper articles and editorials have as-

the July/4 US Independence

Day reception when the chief

guest at the reception. Senate

sailed the US Embassy saying guards were overzealous and refused to take notice of Sajiad's status. The right-wing Jamaat-e-Is-

lami urged Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto to retaliate by expelling several US diplomats.

There is absolutely no excuse for misbehaving with a senior dignitary like the chairman Senate and proper, stern action must be taken by the Pakistani authorities to knock some sense into the Americans based in Islam-

abad," wrote Fahd Husain of the Nation.

New cases of polio worldwide fall to all-time low

ATLANTA, July 7: New cases of polio worldwide fell to an all-time low of 6,179 last year as worldwide immunisation rates rose to 83 per cent government health officials

continued to account for 60 per cent of reported polio cases, and polio remains en-

Kumaratunga ordered to such surveillance, shortly after coming to power in August 1994.

and sophisticated equip ment imported to intercept cell ular phone conversations as vell, officials sources said.

eral strike by electricity em in a four-day black out in May.

Thambu Ramalingam died

However, it was reacti wated

had been a major shake up ployees plunging the country

jor Tilak Dunuwille, a military spokesman. The assessing escaped.

MOSCOW, July 7: Boris

foster democracy and good

government. The nuts-and-

bolts of reform and running

the country do not interest

him. He is an autocrat who

mastered the craft of electoral

politics, a power player not a

campaign was a virtuoso per-

formance by any standards, the

master work of a brilliant,

65-year-old president's last

hurrah. Given his age and

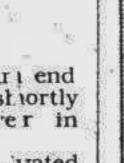
health problems many people

Yeltsin's comeback election

It could turn out to be the

policy expert.

ruthless politician.



killed a retired senior government official in the northern Jaffna Peninsula, a military

AP adds: Tamil Tiger rebels

at the Jaffna hospital after being shot on Saturday, said Ma-

Press reports said the ere

local journalists

the NIB after it failed to ale rt the government about a ger. 1-

official said Sunday.

Konrad Straussenberg, a New Delhi based German diplomat, displays on July 6 200 th ousand signatures from the German public expressing sympathy and support for the four we stern hostages being held by the Al-Faran militant group. The four westerns from G'ermany, Great Britain and the Unites States, have been held for the past one year.

- AFP/UNB photo President Chandrika Yeltsin-an autocrat who mastered craft of electoral politics

Yeltsin knows as much about won in last week's run of with getting power and using it as Communist leader Gennady anyone in Russia today. It is, a close aide once said, the pres-Zyugano v. "All we can do now is just ident's "friend, his ideology, his concubine," reports AP. Yeltsin has done little to

wait for him to die," one of Yeltsin's many vanquished rivals, ultre mationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsk v. said as the election return ? came in. Yeltsin was a maverick who

questi on whether Yeltsin will

rose to power in a vacuum the Soviet system was imploding, people had lost faith in the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev. His departure could create another void, an opening for the kind of forceful. charismatic cuitsider that Yeltsin once was.

Jealous of his power, Yeltsin

encourages no clear succes-

sors. He even el minated the

post of vice president a few

says the prime minister would take over temporarily, then call new elections. The list of allies, especially young reformers, used by

years ago; the constitution now

Yavlinsky, leaving voters with what many said was a sorry choice: Yeltsin or communism.

party are stunted. Russian news media were the president's handmaidens throughout the campaign. "Even though the Yeltsin

regime has been legitimised

again, it can hardly be called

democratic," said pollster lgor Klyamkin. Despite his age, his heart trouble, his deeply reclusive depressions and his drinking, Yeltsin has always acted as

But the question of succession will not go away. In the final days of the runoff. Yeltsin moved to neutralise it as adroitly as he neutralised his democratic challengers and as he put his Communist foe on

nationalism. Civil libertarians quailed at the fierceness of his law-and-order rhetoric. He demanded sweeping powers over nearly all facets of government, from the economy to

sia's next president.

He spoke of becoming president "before the year 2000," clearly implying Yeltsin would die, resign or become incapacitated before his fouryear term ends.

Yeltsin and his inner circle

ers believe, if they would, that their man was next in line to the throne. Still, the Lebed drama has

yet to play out.

ers Lebed so boldly tried to claim. And the election returns were barely in before Yeltsin's faithful prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, began hinting that Lebed might have overstepped his bounds.

So far, Lebed seems oblivi-Perhaps he thinks Yeltsin will give him what he wants. Or perhaps he sees himself as Boris Yeltsin circa 1989 a populist hero, a maverick destined

Floods hit over 1m Chinese in a province

BEIJING, July 7: More than

one million Chinese in one province alone were guarding against some of the worst floods in over a century while officials elsewhere moved to combat food speculators, official media said today, reports Reuter. The floods hit the provinces

Anhui and Jiangxi, causing more than 2.0 billion US dollars of damage. Many areas face a bleak harvest, with newly-planted rice

of Hubei, Guizhou: Zheijiang

and corn seedlings washed (3.3 million acres) swamped

The National Press today gave no overall figures for casualties and property damage.

said on Friday, reports Reuter. Cases in 1995 fell 28 per cent from 1994 and fell 82 per cent from 1988, the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said. The Indian subcontinent

demic'in most countries in Western and Central Africa. Polio was eradicated in the Americas earlier this decade. while cases in the Eastern Mediterranean, Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific are

down sharply since 1988.

serve out the second term he

Yeltsin and then discarded over the last five years is long He made mincemeat in this campaign out of rivals in the democratic camp like Grigory

"Something else needs to emerge and it hasn't yet," said Michael McFaul, an analyst at the Carnegie Foundation think tank in Moscow. "There's a real vacuum." Russians can speak freely and the vote was clean, but

though he expected to live-and rule-forever.

the defensive. basic elements of democracy He did it by bringing the are feeble. Parliament is weak, so is the legal system political third-place finisher in the

foreign policy - the powers of a regent.

> remained silent, content to let Lebed's nearly 11 million vot-

The president has not silenced Lebed. But neither has he granted the sweeping pow-

ous to the storm warnings. for greatness, an outsider

coming void.

away and 1.35 million hectares

poised to seize power from the