

# BRIEFLY



Three-year-old Ahmed Malik, injured in the St Luke's School attack, is visited by father Javed Pervaiz as he recovers in Birmingham Children's Hospital on Tuesday. Police have arrested a man in connection with the attack in which a man attacked children and adults with a machete.

— AFP/UNB photo

**Hamas leader escapes Gaza prison:** A senior Hamas military chief escaped on Tuesday from Gaza prison where he had been detained since a wave of suicide bombings in Israel in March, a Palestinian source said. AFP reports from Gaza Strip.

Awad Silmi, 25, one of the leaders of Ezzedin al Qassam, the military wing of the Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS), escaped with another unknown Palestinian detainee, the source said. Silmi was arrested by the Palestinian authority in the crackdown on Islamic militants which followed the four suicide bombings in Israel in late February and early March that left 58 dead in the Jewish state.

**Netanyahu's daughter to join army:** Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's daughter Moa, who is returning to Israel from the United States this week and plans to join the army, says she hopes the media will let her be. AP reports from Jerusalem.

"I have no intention of becoming a celebrity in Israel," the 18-year-old was quoted as telling the Yediot Achronot daily.

She is Netanyahu's daughter by his first wife. The Israeli press located her in New York City a few weeks before Israel's May 29 elections, living with her mother, stepfather and siblings.

**Sihanouk leaves for Cambodia:** A day after bad weather forced them to turn back, a plane carrying King Norodom Sihanouk and his wife left Wednesday for Cambodia, a news report said. AP reports from Beijing.

The king has spent almost three months abroad seeking medical treatment for a variety of ailments including diabetes, cancer and brain lesions. Sihanouk was seen off at the Beijing airport by Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Wu Tao, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

**Chinese student jailed for 65 yrs:** A Chinese student was sentenced Tuesday to at least 65 years in prison for the stabbing death of a fellow Chinese graduate student and his wife, AP reports from Moscow.

The term ordered by 2nd District Judge Ida Leggett is the mandatory minimum. Wenkai Li will serve for the May 29, 1995, slayings. The sentence included a 40-year term for the murder of Xia Ge, 25, and a 25-year term for the murder of her husband, Ning Li, a University of Idaho doctoral student. The terms are to be served consecutively.

**Lightning kills 2 in Singapore:** Lightning killed a man and his son at their fish farm in Singapore, the Straits Times newspaper said yesterday. Reuter reports from Singapore.

Pang Suk Eng, 50, and his 30-year-old son Chee Seng were found unconscious by neighbours with burn marks over their bodies after a thunderstorm on Tuesday. They were declared dead by a local ambulance crew. "They had gone out to check on their puppies despite the heavy rain and thunder," Oh Kian Seng, the neighbour who found the bodies of the two men, told the Straits Times.

**Air crash kills 17 in Australia:** All 17 people on board a twin Otter light aircraft were feared killed on Tuesday when it crashed in Papua New Guinea's southern highlands province. Australian radio and airline officials said yesterday. Reuter reports from Sydney.

An air safety team was heading for the scene of the crash. The twin-engine aircraft, which was operated by the Papua New Guinea Airline, Milne Bay Air, was on a flight from the remote outpost of Bosavi to the provincial capital Mendi. A spokesman for Australia's Foreign Ministry said that an Australian pilot was believed to be among the dead but added that details were still sketchy.

**2 ROK ex-presidential aides freed:** Two retired generals, charged with helping a former military强人 collect bribes, were released Wednesday pending the conclusion of their corruption trial, AP reports from Seoul.

Ahn Hyun-tae, chief bodyguard of former President Chun Doo-hwan, and Sung Yung Wook, a chief tax administrator under Chun, were freed six months after they were arrested in January on corruption charges.

**Strong quake hits NZ's S Islands:** A sharp magnitude 5.3 earthquake rocked the northern end of the South Island on Wednesday, AP reports from Wellington.

Police said there were no reports of serious damage or injuries. Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences Seismologist Terry Webb said the quake hit at 9.36 a.m. New Zealand time (2136 GMT Tuesday).

**89th Ariane space rocket takes off:** The 89th Ariane European space rocket took off Tuesday from the space centre in Kourou and successfully launched two telecommunications satellites. Ariane space officials said. AFP reports from Kourou.

The take off occurred at 2225 GMT, and the deployment of the Arab Sat-2a and Turkut 1c satellites were completed some 20 minutes later. The launch used the most powerful of the Ariane series, the Ariane 440, with French aerospace group Aerospatiale — which built the two satellites on board — taking full responsibility for the flight.

**7 years' effort of countless aching fingers put Islam online**

QOM, Iran, July 10: With its domed Islamic shrines and bearded Muslim clerics, this ancient religious city now has at least one place that's cutting-edge: All Korani's computer centre, reports AP.

Beneath the gold-and-turquoise minarets of a theological seminary, Korani runs an ambitious project to place 5,000 Islamic texts on computers and make them available to scholars worldwide via the Internet.

It's believed to be the biggest project of its kind, and after seven years and countless aching fingers, Korani and his small staff have hand-punched 2,000 Persian and Arabic books onto their computers at the Golpaygani Seminary, an hour's drive south of Tehran.

"We still have a long way to go," said the engaging Korani, a Shi'ite Muslim cleric who

wears a white turban, brown glasses and a perpetual smile.

Korani says his aim is simply to help scholars of Islam, whose research often requires digging through countless religious texts dating back to the birth of Islam and its holy book, the Koran, some 1,400 years ago.

But Korani's work also reflects a modernizing impulse in Islamic Iran that's not often visible from beyond its borders. While some older, traditional clerics in Iran see such technology as a threat to their pre-eminent roles, a younger generation embraces the changes.

"In the human sciences, it takes so much time to conduct research," said Korani, age 50. "If you have this facility, you can really use your time well."

A quick computer search can produce a list of Islamic

commentaries down through the centuries on issues ranging from how a husband should relate to his wife to why Muslims should not eat pork.

Korani, best known as Iran's leading religious centre, is not a place one associates with modern technology.

Atayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, father of Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution, taught in Lebanon, is himself an incongruous mix of traditional and modern.

Korani, originally from Lebanon, is himself an incongruous mix of traditional and modern.

His Spartan office has a small desk and one simple chair. Even that remains empty when he entertains visitors by sitting with them on a faded green carpet and drinking cardamom-flavored tea.

His metal bookshelf is filled with classic Islamic texts in Persian and Arabic. Interspersed with the Reader's Digest Bible, several boxes of

computer diskettes and a well-thumbed copy of "Teach Yourself DOS."

Down the hall, grey-bearded clerics in the library still pore over dusty books with worn covers and cracked spines. But Korani's charges, most of them in their 20s, feverishly pound away on the keyboards in the nearby computer rooms.

When it's completed, Korani's Encyclopedia of Islamic Laws Centre will have a database on all branches of Islamic law as well as the answers to thousands of religious questions on subjects such as medicine, education and economics.

The centre is open to all scholars. Korani said, proudly noting that the Vatican sent researchers from Rome to study Islamic texts on Jesus, regarded as a prophet by Muslims. To demonstrate the

wealth of material on file, Korani barked out a quick word search for "Jesus," producing a long list of entries.

Iran's Islamic leaders have sought to encourage computer use in recent years, but the process has been slow.

US sanctions have made it difficult to obtain American models. A weak economy makes imports from elsewhere prohibitively expensive. And Iran has also had to develop its own software in the Persian language.

The texts are all in Persian or Arabic, but Korani plans to include some information in English on the Internet page so English-speakers can contact the centre.

"We are not against technology," Korani said. "We believe that this technology is the gift of God and should be available to all people."

Grand Ayatollah Mohammad-Reza Golpaygani, the man the seminary is named after, was so conservative he believed that Islam did not permit music of any kind.

But before the Ayatollah died in 1993, Korani was able

# International



US President Bill Clinton (R) meets on Tuesday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the Oval Office of the White House. Netanyahu is scheduled to be in Washington today. — AFP/UNB photo

Britain, France warned to pull out troops from KSA

LONDON, July 10: Britain and France have been warned to pull their troops out of Saudi Arabia, by one of the fiercest opponents of the Saudi regime and of the United States' presence in the Gulf, the independent reported today.

Osama bin Laden, who the paper said has been accused by Western and Arab governments of being "the financier of an Islamic international," told the paper in an interview that such a move was necessary to avoid the fate of the US soldiers killed by a bomb in Saudi Arabia two weeks ago.

The 40-year-old Saudi dissident said that killing the Americans marked "the beginning of war between Muslims and the United States."

The attack came less than a month after four Saudi Islamic militants were executed for a November car bomb attack against a US military office in Riyadh that left five Americans and two Indians dead.

Clinton, standing alongside his guest in the elegant White House East Room, gently urged Netanyahu to have a high level dialogue, saying "the more contact the better."

Clinton, starting a five day U.S. visit, lift the door open to building of new Jewish settlements in occupied Arab territories, a position Washington strongly opposes.

## Netanyahu promises Clinton to keep ME peace process alive

WASHINGTON, July 10: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu promised President Bill Clinton on Tuesday he would keep the Middle East peace process alive but offered no specific new concessions to back up that pledge, reports Reuter.

At a news conference after their first meeting since Netanyahu ousted U.S.-backed Prime Minister Shimon Peres in the May 29 election, Netanyahu assured Clinton his new hardline government would continue to strive for peace with security, with Arab states including Syria.

While cordiality was the order of the day between him and Clinton — who needs U.S. Jewish voter support for his own November 5 re-election bid — Netanyahu stuck to the tough positions that won him

a narrow victory over Peres.

He offered no timetable for a first meeting with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to discuss his expanding Palestinian sway in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

He also said without elaborating that he was prepared to negotiate with Syria. President Hafez al-Assad, a nod to U.S. concerns his right wing Likud government would slow the pace of peace negotiations with Syria and the Palestinians.

But he stressed that Israel's security is paramount and a prerequisite for peace, and said a "ceaseation of hostilities" would help build the trust "which is badly needed between Israel and Syria."

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## Senators unhappy with Clinton's officials answers on Dhahran blast

WASHINGTON, July 10: Lawmakers examining a deadly terrorist attack on US airmen in Saudi Arabia peppered top Clinton administration officials with questions and came away still concerned about what was done and hot done to protect troops in the field, reports AP.

At a contentious hearing Tuesday, a panel of President Clinton's top defence officials acknowledged some mistakes in the months leading up to the June 25 terrorist truck-bomb attack on US military command, which is responsible for the Golan Heights.

The obvious fact is that they didn't do enough because 19 Americans are dead, Sen. Joseph Lieberman, a Connecticut Democrat, said of the high-ranking officials who are responsible for protecting thousands of US military personnel in Saudi Arabia. "We can't ever come to another hearing months or years from now and look back and say we didn't do enough."

At times lawmakers expressed bewilderment at the

answers they received. Sen. John Warner, a Virginia Republican, said he was "stunned" that Peay apparently had failed to closely question Air Force Brig. Gen. Larry Schwaller following the blast about whether the Saudis had refused a request for a wider perimeter around the Khobar Towers housing complex.

Later, when Peay said it never had occurred to him that terrorists would use a much larger bomb than one used in a smaller-scale attack on US forces in Riyadh last November, Sen. Richard Bryan, a Nevada Democrat, said, "I find that somewhat shocking."

Later, the committee went into closed session and heard from Prince Bandar Bin Sultan, the Saudi ambassador to the United States. A government official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said.

Russian forces also imposed a 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew on the entire republic, shut down the airport in Grozny, the capital, and closed off the city to civilian traffic.

The clampdown and the assault shattered the already tattered ceasefire accord that was part of Yeltsin's re-election campaign and darkened hopes for a negotiated end to the 19-month conflict in Chechnya.

The Russian commander in Chechnya said he read Yeltsin's victory as a mandate for the Kremlin's military campaign to

## Syrian FM says Arab countries won't give up any land

DUBAI, July 10: Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al-Shara said on Tuesday that Arab countries would not give up any land and that unless Israel changed its policies it would close the door to the peace process, reports Reuter.

"What we see now is international consensus supporting the Arab side toward the peace process," he said.

"But on the opposite side the stand of the new Israeli government never lets an opportunity go by without asserting defiance of the international community and ridiculing the basis of the peace process."

Shara was speaking in Riyadh where he arrived on Tuesday for talks with his Saudi counterpart Prince Saud Al-Faisal. A copy of his remarks was provided to Reuters.

He said Israel "adopts radical policies which if they continue will close the door forever against setting up a lasting and just peace."

"He who thinks that Arab will accept under any political circumstances ... relinquishing any part of their occupied territory or usurped rights, is mistaken," Shara said.

Saudi Television showed Prince Saud speaking at the start of a joint Saudi-Syrian meeting intended to strengthen economic and other ties.

He said it was "necessary for Israel to resume talks on the Syrian, Lebanese and Palestinian tracks without delay."

Shara and Prince Saud reiterated their support for the conclusions of an Arab leaders' summit in June held after Benjamin Netanyahu was elected Israel's Prime Minister.

Arab leaders told Israel's new government that they would reconsider promises made in five years of Middle East peace talks if it tried to do the same.

Syria has urged Clinton to use the meeting to curb what it called Netanyahu's "racist and aggressive attacks."

## Clinton has ordered US training of Bosnian army

WASHINGTON, July 10:

President Clinton has ordered the start of the long-awaited US-led programme to train and equip the Bosnian armed forces, reports AP.

Clinton's action Tuesday came hours after the Bosnian parliament removed a final stumbling block and passed a law integrating the Muslim-Croat federation's military forces.

"When implemented, it will strengthen security for all Bosnians and contribute significantly to a lasting peace in the region," the president said in a statement.

"With the passage of the law, the Bosnian government has made good on its commitments," Clinton said. "Now we can make good on ours: The US-led, international train-and-equip programme

will begin immediately."

And he said the United States will soon transfer about 100 million dollars in military equipment to Bosnia.

The White House said the military hardware includes 46,100 rifles, 1,000 machine guns, 6,592 radios and tactical telephones, 45 tanks, 80 armored personnel carriers, 480 light antitank weapons and 15 utility helicopters.

The administration is hopeful that other countries, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Malaysia and the United Arab Emirates, will contribute more than 140 million dollars. Turkey has already begun training Bosnian Army personnel.

Clinton said the actual training will be conducted and managed by MPRI, a US-based company.

## Russian forces pound Chechen village

MOSCOW, July 10: Russian artillery and aircraft pounded a Chechen village Tuesday,

threatening the breakaway republic with a new spiral of bloodshed just days after Boris Yeltsin won a new term promising peace in Chechnya, reports AP.

Russian forces also imposed a 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew on the entire republic, shut down the airport in Grozny, the capital, and closed off the city to civilian traffic.

The clampdown and the assault shattered the already tattered ceasefire accord that was part of Yeltsin's re-election campaign and darkened hopes for a negotiated end to the 19-month conflict in Chechnya.

Both sides have accused each other of violating the cease fire and a subsequent accord on pulling out Russian troops and on rebel disarmament.

keep the mostly Muslim Federation.

Yeltsin himself on Tuesday blamed the renewed violence on the rebels, saying they had long ignored the ceasefire, according to his press service.

Separatist