

BRIEFLY

PRD leader held in Indonesia: Indonesian authorities have arrested the leader of a pro-democracy group which Indonesian President Suharto has accused of subversive activity, an official said yesterday. AFP reports from Jakarta.

Junior Attorney General Suhadibroto told journalists that Budiman Sujatniko, 27, head of the People's Democratic Party (PRD), had been arrested but gave no further details. Military and police spokesmen were unavailable for comment. Suharto last week accused PRD as "clearly involved in subversive activities".

Head of Myanmar junta in Malaysia: The head of Myanmar's military government arrived in Malaysia yesterday on a surprise visit that underlines Southeast Asia's policy of "constructive engagement" with the Yangon regime. Reuter reports from Kuala Lumpur.

General Than Shwe, his wife Daw Kyaling Kyaling and a number of Cabinet officials and senior officials were officially welcomed in a ceremony at Kuala Lumpur's parliament square, the national news agency Bernama said. Than Shwe was to meet Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad yesterday after which delegations from the two countries would sign several bilateral agreements on the first day of his five-day visit.



A woman cries as she identifies the body covered with a blanket which was retrieved from Kanlaon volcano on Sunday. The volcano spewed rocks and dust, killing three people including a Briton in the incident while 18 people were rescued. — AFP/UNB photo.

Pak customs seize 10 tonnes of hashish: Pakistani customs authorities said yesterday they had seized nearly 10 tonnes of hashish from Afghanistan that was meant to be smuggled to the West. Reuter reports from Karachi.

Nobody has been arrested after the 9,930-kg (21,891-lb) stock off fine quality drug was found on Thursday, Customs Collector Afzal Amir Shah told a news conference.

Rebels kill 14 in Uganda: Fourteen bus passengers were killed and another 30 people were injured in two separate rebel attacks outside the northern city of Gulu, newspapers reported Sunday. AP reports from Kampala.

The rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army first sprayed with bullets a bus 14 kilometres (8 miles) south of Gulu on Friday morning, killing two passengers and wounding 30, the Sunday Vision newspaper said. It said the bus was en route to Kampala, 280 kilometres (173 miles) to the south.

Ex DPRK minister dies: Kim Yu Sun, a former North Korean sports minister and member of the International Olympic Committee, has died after a long illness, North Korea's official news agency said Monday. He was 64. AP reports from Seoul.

The North's Korean Central News Agency said Kim died on Saturday after devoting his life "to elevating the prestige of our Republic in international society."

Plane crash kills 5 in Brazil: A twin engine Seneca carrying five people crashed into three homes when its wing caught a high-tension wire as it tried to make an emergency landing in the fog, police said Sunday. AFP reports from Sao Paulo.

The five people aboard the aircraft including a six-year-old boy, were killed in the accident Saturday police said.

Gunmen kill 7 peasants in Colombia: Unidentified gunmen killed seven peasants in southwest Colombia — a region rocked since late July by protests against the government's chemical spraying of illicit drug crops authorities said on Sunday. Reuter reports from Bogota.

Police and military officials said the killings occurred on Saturday night in the small town of Orejuela near Colombia's border with Ecuador in Narino province. The victims included four brothers who were running down as other townspeople watched in horror, the officials said.

Clash leaves 8 killed in Tajikistan: A gunbattle between rival gangs 60 kilometres (36 miles) west of the Tajik capital Dushanbe, left eight people dead and seven wounded Interfax said on Sunday, quoting Interior Ministry sources. AFP reports from Moscow.

The sources said the clash in the village of Tursunzade, which happened overnight Saturday, had no political links and appeared to be a settling of scores between rival gangs.

Missing bin's good condition from TWA Flight raises doubts

EAST MORICHES, New York, Aug 12: A missing cargo bin from TWA Flight 800 was hauled ashore and its relatively good condition raised doubts about a primary theory in the crash — that a bomb was placed in the front hold, reports AP.

"Nothing surprises me anymore," James Kallstrom, the FBI agent in charge of the investigation, said Sunday.

For several weeks, key investigators have speculated off the record that a bomb placed in or around the forward cargo hold ripped the Paris-bound jumbo jet apart shortly after takeoff July 17, killing all 230 people on board.

A source close to the investigation told The Associated Press on Sunday that possible causes now being closely examined are a bomb hidden in a food cart or in carry-on luggage.

BEIJING, Aug 12: The United States is frustrating China's rise as a global power, foiling its ambitions for sports glory and encouraging its youth to have sex. So run the sentiments expressed on China's airwaves and streets, reports AP.

Anti-American feelings in China are at their most rabid since President Nixon met Chairman Mao Tse-tung in 1972.

The ill will, pushed but not wholly orchestrated by government propaganda and military hardliners, threatens to hobble the slow, shaky steps Beijing and Washington are making to improve relations.

"The US image in China is deteriorating and will deteriorate further," said Wang Jisi, director of the government-run Institute of American Studies.

The state-run media and Foreign Ministry officials assailed NBC television announcer Bob Costas for mentioning China's dismal human rights record and rampant copyright piracy during the opening ceremonies.

"From the Olympics, you

Azad Kashmir president loses no-confidence vote

ISLAMABAD, Aug 12: President Sikandar Hayat of Pakistan-ruled Azad (free) Kashmir lost a no-confidence vote today, the state radio said, reports Reuter.

"It said the no-confidence move, made by the ruling Pakistan People's Party of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, was passed by 39 of the 55 members of the two-chamber parliament in the state capital Muzaffarabad. Opposition deputies boycotted the session.

Hayat is a member of the regional All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference (AJKMC) Party led by former state premier Sardar Abdul Qayyum whom the PPP defeated in a state assembly election on June 30.

Sikandar has called the no-confidence move unconstitutional and said he must be allowed to complete his second five year term. He elected in May over objections from the PPP, which was then in opposition in Azad Kashmir.

The AJKMC has accused the Pakistani government of rigging the June 30 election. The PPP denies the charge.

29 die after eating contaminated food in Bombay

BOMBAY, Aug 12: Twenty-nine textile mill workers have died and nearly 100 others are seriously ill after eating contaminated food at a party, police said today, reports AFP.

The deaths occurred after a large number of mill employees consumed rice, lentils and vegetables at a party in the nearby industrial town of Bhiwandi on August 6, a police spokesman said here.

Local authorities said the food the men ate had been mixed with datura, a toxic plant, probably by mistake.

The victims were rushed to a Bhiwandi Hospital with complaints of cramps and convulsions but were later transferred to three hospitals in Bombay.

Ninety-four people were in serious condition, including two men who had hosted the party, the police said.

she wants to have them all

LONDON, Aug 12: A woman with eight fetuses in her womb and 1.5 million dollars in her media offers in her pocket, has rejected doctors' call to have some of the eight aborted or risk giving birth to dead or ailing babies and maybe die herself, reports AP.

The doctors say that chances of all eight being born alive and undamaged are nil. But Mandy Allwood's deal with News of the World, Britain's biggest tabloid, means that the more babies she has who survive, the more cash she'll get from the paper for her story and from other sources.

"If all goes well over the next year, we are talking about one million pounds (1.5 million dollars) in sponsorship, syndication and deals," her publicist Max Clifford said Sunday.

Heavy fighting erupts between Somali factions

MOGADISHU, Aug 12: Heavy fighting was reported Sunday between militant loyalist faction leaders Ali Mahdi Mohammed and Hussein Mohamed Aidid, a former US Marine who succeeded his father a week ago, reports AP.

Witnesses said Aidid's militiamen attacked the town of Balad, about 28 kilometres (17 miles) north of Mogadishu, with 40 pick-up trucks mounted with weapons early in the morning.

The latest round of fighting cast further doubts on the possibilities of reconciliation between Ali Mahdi and Aidid's factions following the death of Gen. Mohamed Farrah Aidid.

Balad, with a population of 300,000 people, has largely escaped faction fighting since the ouster in 1991 of the late dictator Mohamed Siad Barre when the country began a slide into Anarchy.

Rebels control most of Grozny as fighting continues

Lebed, Chechen commander reach 95pc accord in talks

MOSCOW, Aug 12: Russia's Chechnya troubleshooter Alexander Lebed and Chechen separatist commander Aslan Maskhadov reached "95 per cent" agreement in talks on Chechnya's future ties with Russia, Interfax news agency quoted a source close to Maskhadov as saying today, reports AFP.

"They reached 95 per cent common ground on the issue of relations between Chechnya and Russia," he source said.

The source added that during the overnight talks in the southern Chechen town of Novy Adagi, Lebed, Russia's National Security Council chief, had offered a "new approach to resolve the Chechen conflict."

The Chechen source said Maskhadov "agreed with the plan put forward by Lebed."

"A very constructive dialogue was established," said Alexander Barkhatov, the spokesman for the Russian Security Council quoted by ITAR-TASS.

Earlier report says: Heavy fighting continued Monday, and the rebels continued to hold much of the city, Russian forces said they were abandoning air attacks and would focus on sending in ground troops backed by armoured vehicles.

Lebed, a retired general and Russia's new national security chief, met with the separatist military leader, Aslan Maskhadov, and a high-ranking rebel delegation, including the rebels' main spokesman, Movladi Udugov, and field commander Shirvani Basayev.

Islamic leaders also attended. They discussed conditions for a ceasefire and the rebels' withdrawal from Grozny, Lebed's office said.

"There was a very constructive dialogue, the shortness of which can be explained... not only by a shortage of time, since bloodshed continues, but by careful preparation," a statement from Lebed's office said.

The statement referred to the rebel delegation as representing "Ichkeria" — the word the separatists use for their homeland, and usually shunned by the Russians.

The Interfax news agency cited Maskhadov as saying he did not rule out that "the war in the republic can be stopped with the full guarantee of Russia's interests."



King Hussein of Jordan (R) talks with Saudi King Fahd in Jeddah on Sunday. Hussein arrived in Saudi Arabia yesterday for his first summit with King Fahd in six years, to cap a year-long effort to improve ties frayed by the 1990 Gulf crisis. — AFP/UNB photo

US intensifying its power in Gulf despite terrorist bombings

WASHINGTON, Aug 12: Despite two terrorist bombings aimed at forcing American troops from the Gulf, the US military is intensifying its power in the region, not depleting it, reports AP.

About 5,000 soldiers, airmen and other military specialists are heading to the area on temporary duty to participate in land, sea and air exercises throughout the strategic area. Some will be bolstering defenses for air crews living in the region.

They will be joining the 21,000 troops already there. Of that number, about 15,000 are afloat on 20 warships in the Gulf and nearby waters.

Iran contends such activities amount to "provocative acts," and claimed last week that US warplanes violated its air space twice during the on-going exercises. Washington denied it.

But Pentagon officials say the latest round of military maneuvers, some of which will last into December, are evidence of US resolve to maintain peace and stability in the area.

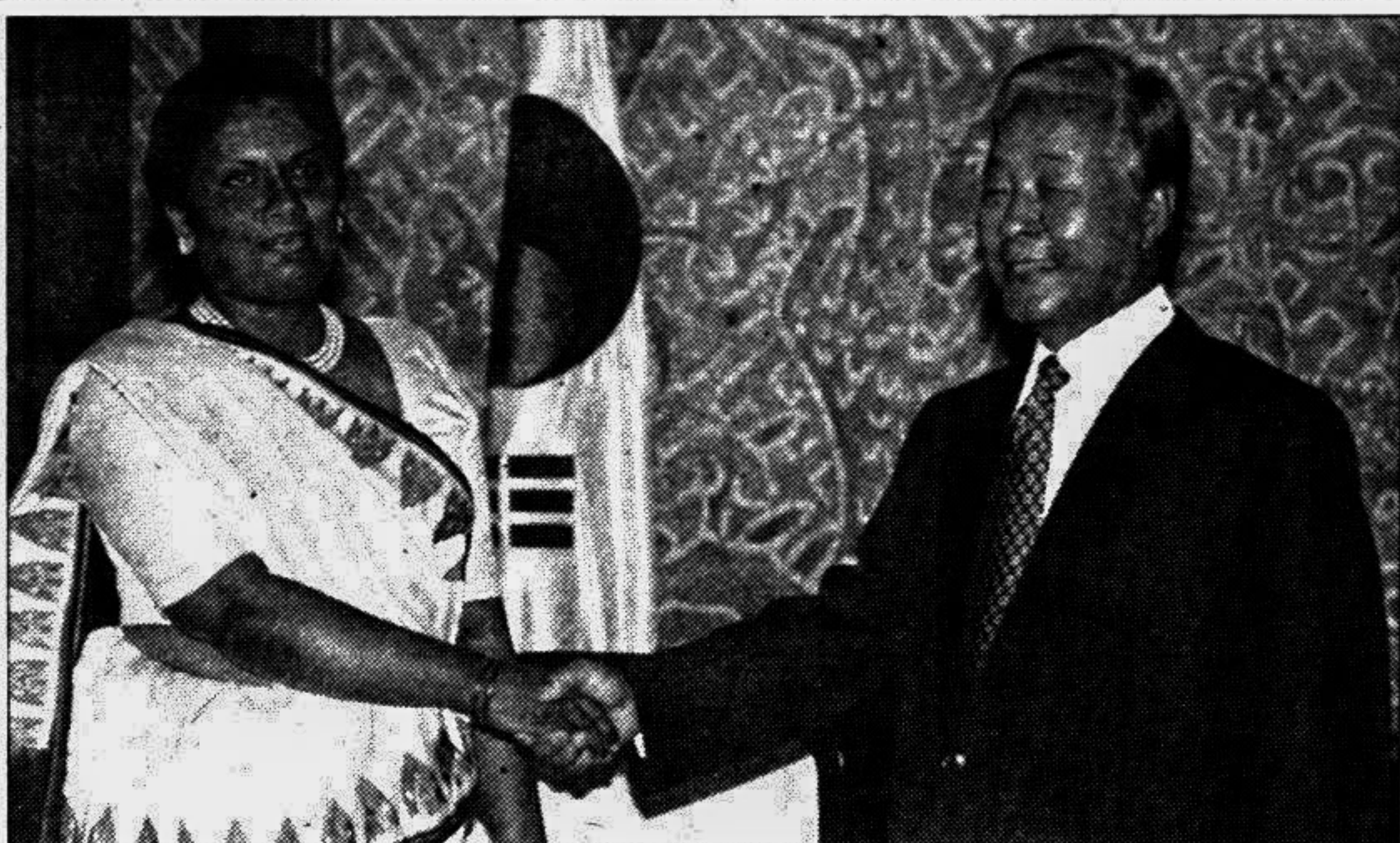
"We will not be driven out," Defence Secretary William Perry vowed in the wake of the June 25 truck bombing that claimed 19 servicemen's lives in Dhahran. In November, a bomb attack in the Saudi capital of Riyadh killed five Americans and two Indians.

The exercises include: "Intrinsic Action 96-3," in which 1,200 Army soldiers rush to the former battlefields of Kuwait to show how quickly they can deploy the armoured tanks and weaponry stored there.

The exercise, which began over the weekend and will last through December, is one of a series conducted by US troops since Saddam Hussein's forces were driven from the emirate during the 1991 Gulf war.

"This is part of the forward presence we're maintaining in the Gulf that allows us to respond very quickly and forcefully to any emergencies that might arise there," Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon said.

"Rugged Nautilus," primarily a naval exercise which involves about 2,000 servicemen and women. It began in July and will last through August to test their ability to rapidly organize US military forces in the area.



South Korean President Kim Young-Sam (R) greets Sri Lanka's President Chandrika Kumaratunga (L) at the presidential Blue House in Seoul on Monday. Kumaratunga arrived in Seoul for a 4-day official visit aimed at securing more South Korean investment and aid for her country amid Tamil rebel attempts to scare off foreign business. — AFP/UNB photo

Anti-US sentiment swells in China

can see that American nationalism is more dangerous than Chinese nationalism," said Song Qiang, one of five authors of the book "China Can Say No."

The premise of the nationalist polemic is "that China must stand up to the United States to save the world from its domineering designs."

The authors suggest "Burning Down Hollywood" in one chapter. In another, they warn against CIA infiltration, claiming the agency promoted sexual promiscuity among Chinese students in the 1980s to nudge the strict Communist society toward liberal democracy.

The book has sold but its first printing of 130,000 and a second one is in the works.

Song and two fellow authors — the other two remain anonymous — insist they had no backing from Chinese authorities. But given tight Communist Party control of the media, the fact that the book is in print shows Chinese leaders do not disapprove.

"The Chinese do not need to be encouraged to say 'no,'" said author Zhang Xiaobo. "The Chinese people have encouraged us to write this book to tell intellectuals and leaders to say 'no.'"

Beyond politics and sports, a popular TV series now being rerun for the fifth time, "Foreign Babes in Beijing," has as its villain a sexually voracious, scheming American woman.

"American really wants too much," said a young taxi driver who only identified himself as Li. "If its military wasn't so strong, China should fight it."

"America's always interfering in other people's affairs. No wonder so many countries don't like it," said Miss Liu, a waitress at one of Beijing's fancy hotels.

Many educated Chinese are also upset at perceived US slights against China, although they dislike the stridency of official propaganda.

China has not poisoned the atmosphere single-handedly. Since Chinese troops shot anti-government demonstrators in Beijing in 1989, US politicians and the media have vilified China for alleged evils ranging from planned infanticide to executing criminals for organ donations.

In March, US House Speaker Newt Gingrich likened Chinese leaders to terrorists, and top think tanks have urged China's ambitions for global power status be contained.

"China has become the symbol of evil," said Kenneth Lieberthal, a University of Michigan scholar and an occasional adviser to the Clinton administration.

"So the discussion is always against the background of how much do you let evil people get away with, which is an awful way to try to work out a relationship," Lieberthal said.

In the past 18 months, China and the United States have differed on human rights, trade, Tibet and nuclear proliferation. Chinese suspicions that the United States was encouraging independence sentiment on Taiwan dragged ties to their lowest levels, in Beijing's estimate, in nearly 20 years.

In every case, Washington demanded action from Beijing. This insistence solidified Chinese resentment into outright opposition.

"What is not lacking is American demands," said American-watcher Wang Jisi.

"The engagement is conditional on Chinese behaviour and many Chinese think that China should not change its behaviour because China has done nothing wrong," said Wang.

With all media under their control, Chinese leaders could stop much of the anti-American criticism. But conservatives and military hardliners, and politicians seeking their support, are dominating the decision-making.

The State Council, the Cabinet, has a special group handling propaganda concerning foreign relations. Filled with conservatives, the group orders newspapers to tone up or down criticisms of foreign countries, according to Chinese sources.

With these institutional and popular pressures, Chinese leaders may not have the stomach to improve relations. China's pariah status in the United States is having the same effect on President Clinton before November's election.

At least three high-level meetings are planned after that date, one between President Jiang Zemin and Clinton, and if he's re-elected, a state summit is likely next year.

"I don't think the Chinese government is ready to make concessions or meet conditions for a high-level dialogue," Wang said.

"I think the leadership hears more voices that say China should say more 'noes' to the United States."

25 civilians killed in fighting 2 lakh Tamil refugees face starvation in Lanka

COLOMBO, Aug 12: Nearly 200,000 Tamil refugees faced starvation as a food convoy waited Monday for permission to cross into rebel-held northern Sri Lanka, reports AP.

The army has blocked 40 trucks loaded with supplies at Vavuniya, the northernmost government-held town, from proceeding to rebel-controlled areas for two weeks. Drought has compounded the problem.

"The situation is very bad... All shops and stores have run out of foodstuffs. Hundreds of people are converging on a few wells that still have water," said Sivathanthi Kishore of the Sri Lanka Red Cross, after a visit to the area.

Over the weekend, military officials promised to let the convoy pass on Monday. But by the morning, relief workers had not been given approval to proceed.

The military halted supplies to the north after the guerrillas overran an army base in the northeastern coastal town of Mullaitivu, killing or capturing 1,400 security forces personnel.

On Monday, the International Committee of the Red Cross offered to escort the food convoy to rebel-held areas.

AFP adds: More than two dozen civilians were killed in fighting between government forces and Tamil Tiger rebels in northern Sri Lanka while a bomb ripped through a crowded Hindu Temple elsewhere and wounded 37 people, officials said today.

At least 25 civilians were killed and another 105 wounded in an intense battle that entered its ninth day today, said S. Thillandarajah, the main civil administrator in the northern district of Kilinochchi.

Off the Record

Money can't buy love

TORONTO: In findings that should cheer up men who aren't rich and anybody who loves a sappy romance story, and American researcher says that money can't buy you love, reports AP.

When college women chose among hypothetical men to date or marry, the attractiveness of big bucks ranked behind things like honesty, good looks and having time for family life.

That emphasizes how misleading a popular misconception is of a longstanding evolutionary theory about what attracts men and women to each other, said researcher Michael Cunningham of the University of Louisville in Kentucky.

The theory says men look for physical attractiveness more than women do, while women seek financial resources in a mate. In the popular mind, Cunningham said, that's been boiled down to "Men check out women for their figure, and women check out men for their wallet."

The new finding emphasizes that while women may find financial resources more important than men do, that's not the top draw, Cunningham said. He spoke Sunday at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association during a symposium on what attracts women to men.

Cunningham presented results from three experiments done with college women and men.

In one, 118 women chose between hypothetical men to date or marry. The men were assigned various combinations of three traits: he would either get 20,000 dollars a year from a job or 200,000 dollar a year from his parents' winning in a sweepstakes, he was honest or not, and he was low, medium or high on dominance and competitiveness in tennis.

The top choice was the guy with more money, honesty and medium dominance. But money didn't do any good by itself. It only helped if the guy was honest too.

Lost in love many times!

JERUSALEM: Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, 67, said that he had lost in love many times until he married wife Suha, 34, in 1992, reports Reuter.

"Really, I was trying to marry many times in my life, but I failed because the circumstances around me were not suitable," the guerrilla-turned-peace-maker told Israel Television Channel one in an interview.

Arafat, who cut an interim peace deal with Israel in 1993 that set up Palestinian self-rule in parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, said even now Suha complained of his work which often kept him from home until after midnight.

"It is very difficult. I know how she is suffering. Still, she is my second wife. My first wife is my people," Arafat, who has a one-year-old daughter, Zahwa, with Suha, said.

Arafat said he was away so much that at one state when an aide brought Zahwa to his office, he did not recognise her.

"Yes, I didn't recognise that she is my daughter. I told him, 'Who is this girl with you,'" Arafat said.



Serbs refuse IFOR access to military compound

SARAJEVO, Aug 12: Bosnian Serb troops have refused to let foreign inspectors see a military compound, prompting the NATO-led peace force to recall its representatives from the Bosnian Serb stronghold Pale, reports AP.

The inspectors visited one site Saturday near Han Pijesak, the Bosnian Serbs' military headquarters, but were turned away at a nearby compound, a NATO statement said Sunday.

Senior NATO officials were discussing the situation Sunday with the Serbs' military and political leadership, and peace force representatives in Pale were recalled to Sarajevo, it said.

Under the Dayton peace agreement, all weapons and ammunition sites had to be registered with NATO by mid-April.

Bosnian Serb soldiers forced a two-day standoff last month at Han Pijesak. Serb military commander Ratko Mladic's compound — with US troops who tried to verify if Bosnian Serb tanks and infantry vehicles were outside proper storage areas.

Mladic has been indicted by the UN war crimes tribunal in the Hague, and an international warrant has been issued for his arrest.

In Sunday's issue of the Slobodna Bosna biweekly, Mladic's lawyer, Alexandros Lykourazos, was quoted as saying such an attempt would lead to "bloodshed."

"Every attempt at arrest would bring casualties, because his people will protect him," Lykourazos said. "Such bloodshed will cause a new explosion and reaction in Republika Srpska."

John Kornblum, the special US envoy to the former Yugoslavia, said Friday in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, that Gen. George Joulwan, NATO's top commander, had said he noted increased violations of the accord by the Bosnian Serbs.

ROK students protest ban on pro-unification rally

SEOUL, Aug 12: Police fired tear gas Monday to break up 600 Korean students protesting a government ban on their planned pro-unification rally, reports AP.

Fighting erupted in front of Seoul's Yonsei University as students, hurling hundreds of petrol-bombs and rocks, tried to break through 2,500 riot police surrounding the sprawling campus.

"Unification!" students repeatedly shouted as they tried to march into the streets.

Police, backed by armoured vans equipped with multiple tear gas launchers, drove the students into the campus. Students regrouped immediately and charged back in a dense fog of tear gas.

"Several students overcome by the acid gas, were seen being helped by colleagues.