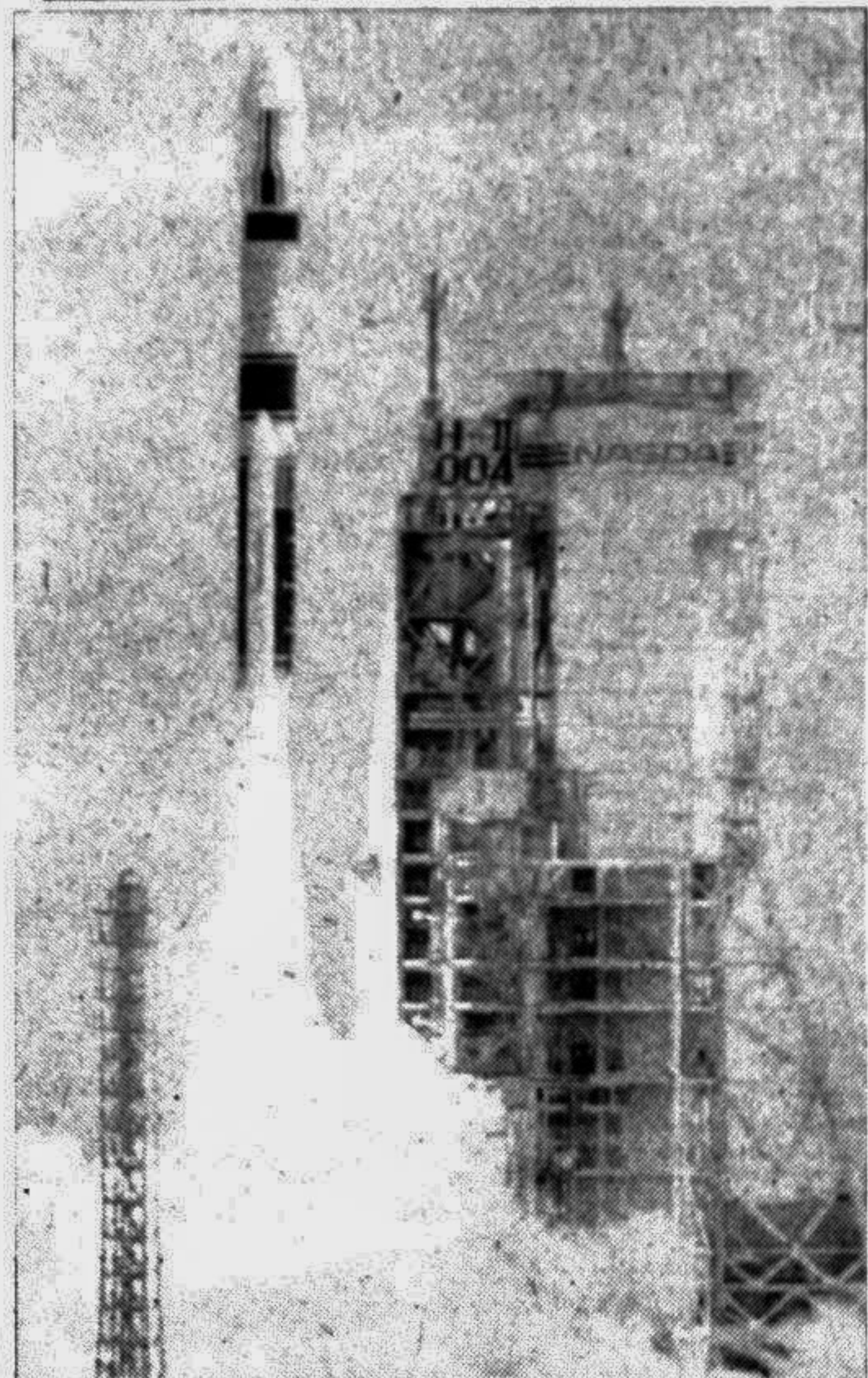


BRIEFLY



A Japanese H-2 rocket blasts off from the Tanegashima Space Centre, some 1,000 kilometres (620 miles) southwest of Tokyo on Saturday carrying an earth-observation satellite in a joint mission with the United States and France. The rocket successfully released into space the Advanced Earth Observing Satellite (ADEOS) about 15 minutes after the takeoff. — AFP/UNB photo

Storm kills 125 Vietnamese fishermen: At least 125 fishermen have died and 107 were listed as missing after a whirlwind sank fishing boats working off a northern Vietnamese province, the Vietnam News Agency said yesterday. AFP reports from Hanoi.

The storm hit boats fishing for cuttlefish 15 kilometres (nine miles) off the province of Thanh Hoa and sank 22 boats, the report said. Another 65 vessels, were missing. Officials in the province, 100 kilometres (60 miles) south of Hanoi, said the exact death toll was not known but was very high.

Yeltsin to get medical treatment: President Boris Yeltsin will undergo an unspecified course of medical treatment during his upcoming vacation, his spokesman said Friday. AP reports from Moscow.

Yeltsin stayed mostly out of sight for weeks and aides say he is exhausted from the rigors of his summer re-election campaign. At his inauguration last week, he looked frail and slurred his words, fueling speculation that his health is deteriorating. Yeltsin has already had two bouts of serious heart trouble. Spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembsky played down the speculation.

Road mishap claims 20 in India: Twenty people were killed and nine injured when a jeep and a lorry collided in the southern Indian State of Andhra Pradesh, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said yesterday. Reuters reports from New Delhi.

The news agency said the accident occurred late on Friday when the jeep, which was carrying a marriage party, crashed into the lorry near the village of Valluru in Medak district.

Christopher to visit Europe in Sept: Secretary of State Warren Christopher will travel to Europe early next month for security talks with US allies and deliver a speech on European security, the State Department said Friday. AFP reports from Washington.

Christopher will meet in London on September 5 with British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind, then go on the same day for talks in Paris with French Foreign Minister Herve De Charette and French President Jacques Chirac. The US official is due September 5 in Bonn for talks with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, said State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns.

Road mishap kills 11 in Manila: Eleven people were killed and 44 others injured after passengers bus and a dump truck collided head-on along national highway in the central island of Cebu, police said yesterday. Reuter reports from Manila.

Police Superintendent Nicanor Casalang said 26 of the 44 injured were seriously hurt when the two vehicles collided in Sibonga town, 590 km (336 miles) south of Manila, on Friday afternoon. The injured were brought to nearby hospitals.

ROK businessman killed in China: A South Korean business executive was killed by two unidentified men in the Chinese province of Jilin, the Foreign Ministry said Saturday. AP reports from Seoul.

Park Byung-hyon, 55, an executive at South Korea's Kia Motors Co., died on his way to a hospital after being stabbed with poison needles by the attackers in Yanji, Jilin, Friday afternoon ministry officials said. The government asked Chinese authorities to investigate the case. It also warned people traveling to China to take precautionary measures against crime. The number of South Korean tourists and businessmen in China has increased rapidly since the two countries normalised relations in 1992.

1 executed in China: Authorities in southern China have executed a man convicted of robbing a cash delivery van at gunpoint. AP reports from Beijing.

Au Haizhong, 32, was executed Thursday in the city of Foshan, in Guangdong province, which borders Hong Kong, the official newspaper Yangcheng Evening News reported.

7 Russian pilots held hostage by Taliban escape:

MOSCOW, Aug 17: Seven Russian pilots held hostage for more than a year in Afghanistan by Taliban Islamic militia have escaped and have made their way to the United Arab Emirates, Russian agencies reported today, says AFP.

The seven were taken prisoner on August 3, 1995 when Taliban militiamen forced their Ilyushin-76 aircraft to land. The plane, belonging to a private Russian airline was bringing arms in for the government in Kabul which is fighting the Islamic group.

Uttarakhand state Vajpayee terms announcement of Gowda 'ridiculous'

LUCKNOW, Aug 17: The opposition leader in Lok Sabha and former prime minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, today described the Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda's announcement as "ridiculous" that the Uttarakhand would be accorded the status of a separate hill state after taking opinion of the state legislature, reports PTI.

Speaking to newsmen here, Vajpayee said "perhaps Deve Gowda does not know that the duly elected successive government of Uttar Pradesh, headed by Kalyan Singh and Mulayam Sing Yadav, respectively, had recommended the setting up of a separate hill state and a resolution of this effect was issued unanimously earlier.

In fact, the United Front government was only trying to 'befool' the people of Uttarakhand, he said and remarked "it is a political gimmick."

Turkey calls for boosting ties with Islamic countries

ANKARA, Aug 17: Turkey has started implementing a new foreign policy which calls for boosting ties with Islamic countries, foreign minister Tansu Ciller said Friday, reports AFP.

Turkey, as a bridge between the east and the west, has launched multi-faceted policies", Ciller told a news conference.

"Turkey is in a position to boost its ties with its eastern neighbours... but while doing that we won't give up our relations with the world with the west", Ciller said.

She defended Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's move to finalise a multi-billion dollars gas accord with Iran a deal much criticised by the United States.

"We have a serious energy shortage and the move is aimed at eliminating this shortage," she said.

171 Tamil refugees reach India

NEW DELHI, Aug 17: At least 171 Sri Lankan Tamils reached India Thursday after fleeing violence in their country, taking the number of refugee arrivals in one month to nearly 200, a newspaper said today, reports AFP.

Four batches of Tamils arrived Thursday in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, which is separated from Sri Lanka by a strip of sea, and many more were reportedly on their way, the Hindu said.

The latest arrivals were taken to a naval jetty and then moved to a refugee camp near the port town of Rameshwaram, the newspaper said, quoting officials saying more were expected to arrive today.

At least 21 Sri Lankan Tamils reached Tamil Nadu some 10 days back as the Sri Lankan army continued a massive offensive against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the island's embattled north.

Dalai Lama backs India's stand on CTBT

NEW DELHI, Aug 17: Tibetan godking and Nobel peace laureate the Dalai Lama supports India's decision to reject a proposed global pact banning nuclear explosions, The Times of India daily said today, reports Reuter.

"I support India's stand on the CTBT (Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty) that all nuclear powers should make a timetable for eventual elimination of all nuclear weapons," the Buddhist spiritual leader told the newspaper in an interview.

"At present, what's happening is that an attempt is being made to prevent non-nuclear powers from testing. This is inadequate... It's very important to work for eventual elimination of all nuclear weapons," he said.

India has vetoed and vowed to oppose further the CTBT being negotiated in Geneva. New Delhi says the draft treaty does not commit the nuclear powers to disarmament within a specified time frame.

Sporadic gunfire in Grozny Lebed demands ouster of Interior Minister Kulikov

GROZNY, Aug 17: With an informal ceasefire in place, only sporadic gunfire resonated Saturday in the Chechen capital, where separatist fighters hold sway and surround remaining Russian troops, reports AP.

The audacious rebel assault on the city August 6 tattered the already shaky confidence of Russian forces in the separatist republic and set off an orgy of blame-casting in the Kremlin.

In Moscow, the man now in charge of the Chechen crisis, Security Council chief Alexander Lebed, called Interior Minister Anatoly Kulikov incompetent on Friday and demanded his resignation for prolonging the war.

Both men appealed to President Boris Yeltsin to decide which one of them stays.

At Lebed's insistence, commanders from the two sides met this week and agreed on the informal truce. Another round of talks was expected Saturday between Gen. Konstantin Pulikovskiy, the Russian commander, and Aslan Maskhadov, the Chechen chief of staff.

Maskhadov, told Associated Press Television, that Lebed is the only Russian official he trusts.

"I trust Lebed because he isn't tainted. He hasn't got blood on his hands," said Maskhadov, who has met twice this week with Lebed in search of a way to end the 20-month war, which has killed more than 30,000 people.

Yeltsin gave Lebed sweeping powers this past week to oversee the military in Chechnya and to end the deeply unpopular war. Lebed said on Friday he had a "radical" plan for ending the bloodshed, but refused to disclose it.

At least 247 Russian soldiers have died and 1,000 have been wounded since the rebels overran Grozny, according to Lebed. The soldiers are dying for nothing, he said, and it is time to negotiate a peace.

Two Russian soldiers were wounded Saturday morning, one when rebels fired on a federal checkpoint and the other when a mine exploded, the federal forces said.

Rebels also attacked Russian troops Friday evening near their main base at Khan-kala, east of Grozny, killing two soldiers, wounding another two, while one was missing, the military said.



General view of Grozny's main street Mira (Peace) destroyed after recent fighting on Friday. Chechen fighters claim to have gained control of the city. — AFP/UNB photo

Assassination attempt against Mubarak Sudan given 90 days to hand over suspects

UNITED NATIONS, Aug 17: The Security Council on Friday gave Sudan 90 days to hand over suspects in the 1995 assassination attempt against Egypt's president or have its planes banned from all UN member states, reports AP.

In a resolution, the 15-member council agreed to meet in 90 days to set a date for the ban to take effect.

Russia and China abstained, expressing concern over the impact of expanded sanctions on one of the world's poorest countries. The other 13 council members voted in favour of the resolution.

Last April, the council voted to require all 185 UN members to reduce Sudanese

diplomatic presence and restrict the movement of Sudanese officials after Sudan refused to hand over three Egyptians sought in the attempt against President Hosni Mubarak in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa.

Ethiopia claims Sudan's state-run airline shipped weapons into its territory and held a plane at Addis Ababa's airport so that one of the suspects could escape.

In an hour-long speech, Sudanese envoy El-Fatih Erwa told the council that his government tried to find the suspects but decided they were probably not in the country.

The Sudan shares the council's view of the need to

punish those who tried to assassinate the Egyptian president. Erwa said, "Sudan is committed to extraditing them if they are on its territory."

But Western governments were not convinced. US Deputy Ambassador Edward Gnehm dismissed Erwa's remarks as "a phony public relations campaign." He called the council resolution a "wake-up call" to the Sudanese.

An AFP report adds, Sudan today denounced as unfair the UN air embargo against it for failing to hand over Islamic militants suspected of trying to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

"Only war can stop polls in Bosnia"

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Aug 17: Responding to a chorus of calls to postpone Bosnia's elections, the top official overseeing the vote said Friday that only war can stop the September 14 balloting. Meanwhile, reports of campaign violations pile up, reports AP.

The process, however imperfect, and we've always said it would be imperfect, is coming along reasonably effectively," said Robert Frowick, who leads the Bosnian mission of the organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which is running the elections.

He said Bosnia has made small advances in the freedoms of expression, assembly and movement-key conditions for the elections set out in the Dayton peace accord.

Furthermore, Bosnia needs institutions that voters themselves have put in place as a first step, first significant step in the democratization process.

Voters will chose a three-

member presidency, a joint legislature, separate assemblies for the Muslim-Croat federation area and the Serb region, and local officials. Voters can register either where they lived in 1991, where they live now, or where they would like to live in the future.

The decision to go ahead with the elections won't be reconsidered "unless there's a major outbreak of violence or war. Something like that could derail it," Frowick said.

His comments reflect a growing gap between human rights groups and Bosnian opposition parties who see the elections as a deadline for minimum democratic progress to be made, and international officials who say a delay in elections would only worsen an already-bad situation.

Meanwhile Croatian authorities have arrested a former Bosnian soldier and accused him of war crimes. Interior Ministry spokesman Slavko Rako said Friday.

Police renew attacks on ROK student protesters

SEOUL, Aug 17: South Korean police renewed attacks on a university campus here Saturday in an attempt to arrest radicals linked to violent protests this week, witnesses said.

Backed by two helicopters spraying tear gas and fluorescent liquid to mark protesters for later arrests, some 2,000 riot policemen stormed Yonsei University in western Seoul, an AFP photographer on the scene said.

Students, numbering around 1,500, pelted the police with firebombs and rocks before they retreated inside the engineering college building and set fire to barricades on the access road to the structure.

Police stopped short of moving into the college in the face of a hail of projectiles, showering down from the

roof. Students threatened to blow up oxygen gas tubes inside the building, where toxic chemicals, gasoline, hydrogen gas tubes, laboratory micro-organisms.

Clashes showed signs of subsiding overnight as exhausted police relaxed their tight presence around the university, letting hundreds of students leave the campus by scaling walls.

Violence has raged on for the past six days after police sealed off Yonsei University to foil annual rallies by leftist students.

AP adds: Anti-government sentiment still flickered at the campus, reverberating with protest songs occasionally punctuated by students shouts demanding that police arrest hundreds of protesters under arrest.

UP goes to polls in Oct

NEW DELHI, Aug 17: India's most populous state will go to the polls in October in an election which could affect the future of Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda's government, a newspaper reported here today, reports AFP.

Sprawling northern Uttar Pradesh, home to 140 million people, will hold the state government election on October 3, 6 and 9, the Hindustan Times reported. Officials were not available to comment on the report.

The daily said the election commission and the Home Ministry, which is responsible for providing security during polling, wanted voting to end before the start of a Hindu festival season in October.

Uttar Pradesh like troubled northern Kashmir, is presently ruled directly by New Delhi. The state was placed under di-

rect rule after its government collapsed in October, 1995 amid internal bickering.

The Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the country's main opposition, has vowed to take power in Uttar Pradesh.

Political analysts say a BJP victory could bring pressure on Deve Gowda's United Front coalition government to quit and call early national elections.

Deve Gowda became prime minister on June 1 following the collapse of a shortlived BJP government in New Delhi after April-May general elections.

In Uttar Pradesh Deve Gowda's Janata Dal (people's party) will be pitted against former premier P.V. Narasimha Rao's Congress (I) Party, which propose up the governing coalition.

Off the Record

Di becomes prisoner in her own palace

LONDON: Princess Diana says she has become a prisoner in her Kensington Palace home because of a stalking photographer, reports AP.

"I constantly feel on edge and am unable to go about my daily affairs without feeling anxious and distressed," Diana said in a court affidavit.

The 1,000-word affidavit was published Friday, a day after Diana obtained a High Court order against photographer Martin Stenning. It bans him from going within 300 yards (metres) of her.

In the affidavit, which Stenning handed over to The Sun newspaper, Diana accused him of harassing and stalking her for six-eight months.

She said she recently grabbed his motorcycle keys in a street tussle, has shouted at him, and she feared she would get ill unless he stopped.

Stenning, 36, who plans to contest the order, is among freelance photographers who hang around the gates of Kensington Palace in west London.

Meanwhile, Buckingham Palace said four photographers have been sent formal letters asking them not to bother Queen Elizabeth II and her family during their summer holiday at Balmoral.

The queen, her husband, Prince Philip, and daughter Princess Anne, arrive there Saturday.

Photographers with zoom lenses stake out public access roads to the estate.



A mother keeps watch over her seven-year-old son in a hospital in Thane on Friday, one of the three hundred and eighty nine primary school children who was taken ill due to food poisoning after eating stale pedas (sweets) distributed at the Independence Day flag hoisting function at Purna village in Bhiwandi 80 kms from Bombay. Nine days ago food poisoning in Bhiwandi itself claimed 49 powerloom workers lives. — AFP/UNB photo

7 Russian pilots held hostage by Taliban escape

MOSCOW, Aug 17: Seven Russian pilots held hostage for more than a year in Afghanistan by Taliban Islamic militia have escaped and have made their way to the United Arab Emirates, Russian agencies reported today, says AFP.

Khmer Rouge breakup may not end Cambodia's troubles

PHNOM PENH, Aug 17: When news of a falling out among the notorious Khmer Rouge guerrillas was made public last week, traditionally superstitious Cambodians pondered the timing, reports AP.

Several years ago King Norodom Sihanouk proclaimed he had a dream in which he was told a new pagoda must be built to house a relic of the Buddha a tooth, and that peace would come to Cambodia.

By chance or cosmic intervention, the cornerstone was laid at the old royal capital of Oudong the same day major desertions from the Khmer Rouge were announced and a split in its leadership became known.

Asuspicious or not, after 2 and half decades of suffering and misery, few would predict that the apparent desertion of several Khmer Rouge commanders and their units will suddenly halt the civil war.

"I am very pleased because I see this as a sign toward national reconciliation, toward peace," said Sam Rainsy, former finance minister and head of the opposition Khmer Nation Party.

Even if the Khmer Rouge breakup proves to be true, however, and there are doubts about that, it may not end Cambodia's troubles: There remains a divided government barely staying off collapse widespread poverty, a countryside littered with millions of mines.

The once-formidable guerrilla movement, whose radical bid to overturn Cambodian society in the 1970s led to the deaths of as many as 2 million people out of the 8 million population, has shown increased vulnerability.

Ghali hails Dole for winning nomination

UNITED NATIONS, Aug 17: Secretary-General Boutros Ghali, a frequent target of Bob Dole, admires Dole and congratulates him on winning the Republican presidential nomination, a UN spokesman said on Friday, reports Reuter.

Dole again referred to the Egyptian diplomat in his acceptance speech on Thursday at the Republican national convention in San Diego. He said that under a Dole presidency, US troops would never serve under Boutros Ghali or any other UN Secretary General.