BRIFILY

Govt, Khmers faction agree to peace: The Cambodian government and a renegade faction of the Khmer Rouge have agreed to a peace settlement, co-premier Hun-Sen said yesterday. AFP reports from Cambodia.

This group recognises the royal government of Cambodia including the law that bans the Khmer Rouge, and they say that all their forces will join the government as one state, one territory and one national administration, he said in this town south of the capital

Kohl to meet Yeltsin: German Chancellor Helmut Kohl arrived in Russia on Saturday for talks with ailing Russian President Boris Yeltsin at a presidential vacation home outside Moscow, AP reports from Moscow.

The two leaders are expected to discuss the expansion of NATO, Russia's war in breakaway Chechnya, and Yeltsin's heart trouble. The visit - Yeltsin's first meeting with a foreign leader in months — comes just two days after the Russian president announced he would have heart surgery later this

Mishap claims 6 in Philippines: One passenger jeep overturned and was hit by another, killing six people and seriously injuring 11 others in a northern Philippine town, police said Saturday, AP reports from San

Police said the first jeep flipped over three times and was hit by an oncoming jeep while it still was rolling late Friday in Mexico town.

Taiwanese FM in Malaysia: One day after returning from a secret trip to Indonesia. Taiwan's foreign minister made an unannounced visit to Malaysia. news media reported Saturday, AP reports from Taipei.

John Chang departed for Kuala Lumpur Friday for the twoday trip, part of Taiwan's efforts to break the diplomatic isolation imposed by China, the reports said. The visits came two weeks after Taiwan Vice President Lien Chan angered China by making a secret visit to Ukraine. China, which claims sovereignty over Taiwan, regularly protests when senior Taiwanese officials visit countries that have diplomatic ties with Beijing.



A publicity picture of the Rapier FSC missile system which successfully tracked the American B2 Stealth Bomber as it flew over the Farnborough Airshow Monday. The Stealth Bomber has earlier been praised by US military as a bomber that cannot be tracked by radar - AFP/UNB photo systems.

Floods claim 86 in Andhra Pradesh: Eighty-six persons have lost their lives in house collapses and flash floods as torrential rains triggered by depression in Bay of Bengal lashed several parts of Andhra Pradesh during the last ten days, PTI reports from Hyderabad

The toll included the 15 victims of Vizianagram boat capsize on August 31. Heavy rains also caused damage to houses and agriculture crops. Nearly 6,031 houses were damaged, including 1113 fully damaged ones, officials sources said.

Shalikashvili to visit Bosnia: US Army Gen. John Shalikashvili, the Pentagon's top military officer. will visit Bosnia next Wednesday for talks with military peacekeeping commanders and other officials, the Defence Department said on Friday. Reuter reports from Washington. Shalikashvili, Chairman of the US, military joint chiefs of staff, will leave Washington this Sunday for Portugal to participate in NATO military committee meetings before traveling from Lisbon to Bosnia on Wednesday. The announcement said he planned to hold a news conference in Sarajevo on

Mafia boss held in Italy: After four years in hiding, a top boss of the Camorra, a criminal syndicate, has been captured in the countryside outside Naples, authorities said Friday, AP reports from Naples.

Wednesday before leaving for Washington that night.

Marzio Sepe was arrested late Thursday night outside an abandoned farmhouse, the Italian news agency ANSA said. ANSA said Sepe. 42, is wanted for several murders over the last 10 years in the Naples area, including the slaying of a rival boss in 1991. The Camorra runs extortion rackets and drug and cigarette smuggling in the Naples area.

Fox TV chief resigns: Fox Television's programming chief has resigned, just days before the start of the network's new fall season, AP report from Los Angeles. John A Matoian was replaced by Twentieth Century Fox Television President Peter Roth, who begins work Sept. 23.

Chase Carey, chairman and chief executive of Fox TV, declined to give a specific reason for the resignation Friday, citing only Matoian's lack of the "level of commitment" needed for the network's challenges in the next few years.

Troops herd villagers from homes to cast votes

Militants rocket BSF camp to herald start of Kashmir polls

SRINAGAR, India, Sept 7: Muslim guerillas fired rockets at a paramilitary camp today to herald the start of Kashmir's first state elections in almost a decade, Indian officials said. reports AFP

Four rockets crashed onto a school building housing men from the Border Security Force (BSF) in Kupwara, near the Pakistan border but no-one was injured, police said. The building was slightly damaged.

A land mine went off elsewhere in Kupwara but there were no casualties. Soldiers defused another mine near a Sikh temple in the adjoining Baramulla district

'The violence came as the first round of staggered balloting got underway in parts of the Himalayan state at 7.00 am (0130 GMT), despite a boycott call by Muslim separatists official and witnesses said

More than 15,000 people have died since 1989 when militants calling for independence or merger with Pakistan ·launched an armed separatist struggle in the region.

Loudhailers in mosques in the rural areas of the Kashmir Valley blared appeals to the people to vote, residents told the news agency. But it was not clear if the appeals were by officials or candidates.

AP adds: Waving rifles and blowing whistles through the streets, security troops herded Kashmiri villagers from their homes Saturday to vote in the state's first election in nine

Villagers accused the troops of forcing them to vote in state assembly elections that New Delhi hopes will restore democracy to Kashmir, where a 7 year Muslim-led rebellion has rested.

claimed about 14,500 lives. In Mazburgh, a sleepy village about 45 kilometers (27 miles) west of the state capital, Srinagar, villagers said soldiers ordered them to vote.

"I have no hope from these elections," said Gul Shan Arah, 24. "These are the very soldiers who have killed my brother-in-

But commanders with India's paramilitary Border Security Force said they were only offering protection for voters.

Pro-separatist leaders this week openly campaigned against the election and appealed to the people to stay home. On Friday, soldiers stopped many of them in villages and small towns. Two secessionist leaders claimed army solders beat them with rifle butts. Two others were ar-

Shops were closed and public transport was idle in most of the valley including the capital city of Srinagar, for the second consecutive day Saturday in response to a call by the All Party Hurriyat Conference, an umbrella group of 32 separatist organisations.

The group opposes the state elections and wants a referendum to decide whether Kashmir should belong to India, to Pakistan, or become independent.

Indian security forces armed with automatic weapons guarded voting stations in school buildings and local offices. Saturday's round of voting will cover 26 of 87 state assembly seats.

The remaining 61 seats will be contested on September 16. 21 and 30 in phased voting that allows authorities to deploy thousands of troops across the

insurgency-wracked northern Indian state of Jammu-Kash-

Results from the voting will be announced only after all phases of the election are com-

in villages and towns throughout the mountainous region, residents were reluctant to participate in the Saturday's

"I would not vote," said Bashir Ahmed. We want free-

At polling stations, voter turnout was low, election officials said. Two hours after the polls opened on Saturday, only five of 920 registered voters had cast their ballots at one station.

Of those who did vote, some saw it as an opportunity to have a say in their state's future.

"I'm voting against terrorism," said A G Wani, 50, a businessman from the apple-growing village of Sopore. "It is clear the election is against terror-

Separatist rebels say the election will not solve the Kashmir problem and have attacked several election meetings, killing more than six

people. Campaigning went on under heavy army and police escort.

The main parties contesting the election are the National Conference, a local Kashmiri group, and three national parties - the Congress, the Janata Dal and the Bharatiya Janata

India has tried to hold elections earlier in Kashmir, but most political parties didn't participate because of the threat of violence by rebels. That threat has diminished by repeated military crackdowns.

Taliban lose 15 posts to Tajik opposition fighters take govt forces

the thunderous explosion of

missiles, heavy artillery and

long range mortars could be

heard. The usually bustling

market at Campani on the

southern outskirts of Kabul was

several kilometres (miles) away

In recent days fighting be-

tween government soldiers and

Taliban fighters has increased

around Kabul and in eastern

province thousands of Taliban

troops were trying to push to-

ward the strategic town of

Sarobi on the highway, that links Kabul to Jalalabad.

gious students turned guerilla

fighters is demanding the gov-

ernment in Kabul step down

Pentagon spokesman reveals

Half-dozen cruise missiles

couldn't be fired against Iraq

of the weaponry, said the com-

plex computerised targeting sys

tems on several of the missiles

"weren't programme completely

in time" to be fired on the first

missiles did not fire as

planned," but back-up missiles

were fired from another Navy

what those problems were, or

say exactly how long it takes to

program targets for the mis-

siles, which can fly upwards of

500 miles (805 kilomters) to

long time," he said. He said mil-

itary planners know weapons

can malfunction and therefore

"Some complex tasks take a

vessel, he said.

their targets.

On the second night, "several

Bacon declined to specify

The Taliban army of reli-

In eastern Logar and Paktia

from the fighting.

Afghanistan.

Buses and taxis that regularly ply that road were parked

KABUL, Afghanistan, Sept 7 Rival Taliban troops lost 15 posts, including a strategic mountain outpost southwest of the capital, in a blistering predawn assault Saturday by government troops, reports AP.

Ground troops overran Sher Ali post overlooking the Taliban stronghold of Maidan Shahr, 40 kilometres (24 miles) southwest of Kabul, said Amrullah, a government spokesman who uses only one name.

The fighting has closed the road between Kabul and Maidan Shahr and temporarily ended a Taliban assault against government forces in Hazera in eastern Logar province.

"The Taliban has lost the high ground along the left side of the road to Maidan Shahr," Amrullah told The Associated

He said 20 Taliban were killed in the initial onslaught and more than 30 injured There were no reports of gov

WASHINGTON, Sept 7: About

half-dozen cruise missiles

that should have been flung at

Iragi air defence sites couldn't

be fired during the attacks aga-

inst Saddam Hussein's forces.

Pentagon spokesman Kenneth

Bacon revealed Friday, reports

launched 44 of the long-dis-

tance, remote-controlled wea-

pons this week at targets inside

Iraq including surface-to-air

missile sites, command-and-

control units and radar sites.

They acted in response to

Saddam Hussein's attacks on

Kurdish minorities in northern

briefing about the effectiveness

Bacon, asked at the Pentagon

The Navy and Air Force

and establish a strict Islamic ernment casualties. From the capital of Kabul

But Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, considered a fundamentaliste Muslim by most, argues an Islamic government already is in place.

Since being sworn in last May Hekmatyar has closed Kabul's theatres, banned Indian movies and music, a popular form of entertainment in the

But fighting between rival Islamic factions in Afghanistan has been going on since Muslim rebels threw out the communists in 1992.

All 10 main Islamic groups say they want an Islamic regime in Kabul, but they can't agree who will head it.

Hekmatyar was one of the biggest enemies of President Burhanuddin Rabbani's until he agreed to stop attacking Kabul and take on the job of prime minister earlier this

plan for such events.

In another development, The

New York Times reports in Sat-

urday's editions that a covert

CIA operation aimed at over-

throwing Saddam was under

cretly overseeing the operation

in northern Iraq left the coun-

try last week as Iraqi forces

moved in, the newspaper said. Quoting unidentified senior

administration officials, the

Times said that President

Clinton had expanded the oper-

ation in January, directing the

CIA to provide weapons, organ-

ise some military training, in-

stall intelligence-gathering

equipment for groups trying to overthrown Saddam.

CIA officers who were se-

mined by the Iraqi attack.

fighters take control of **Dzhirgatal**

DUSHANBE. Sept 7: Tatik opposition fighters have seized the town of Dzhirgatal in the north of the Central Asian State, destroying local administration buildings in a fierce assault, a Tajik officials said today, reports Reuter.

Zafar Ikramov, co-chairman of a joint commission set up to monitor a ceasefire agreement. told reporters that the attack was launched on Friday morning and the Islamic rebels had established control over the town by evening.

Dzhirgatal, near Tajikistan's border with Kyrgyzstan, is about 280 km (175 miles) northeast of the capital Dushanbe.

Ikramov said there must have been casualties in the attack but he could give no details, the buildings destroyed included the local headquarters of the Interior Ministry and State Security.

Tragic!.

NEW DELHI, Sept 7: An Indian carpenter today killed his wife suspecting her to be a witch and two of his children and later jumped to his death from the roof of his house, police said, reports AFP.

Mohammed Ibrahim Khan, 45, suddenly attacked his wife Lateefa Begum, 35, and his six children in the southern city of Hyderabad with a crowbar, killed her and two daughters, aged 11 and two.

The United News of India (UNI) said the other children

were injured. When neighbours rushed out on hearing the children's cries, Khan ran to the roof and

Two Serbs kidnapped in Bosnia

TRNOVO, Bosina-Herzegovina. Sept 7: A band of Muslims sprayed a Serb car with gunfire along the sensitive Gorazde corridor Friday and carried off two men before nearby French NATO troops responded, reports

A 59-year-old woman passenger was shot in the shoulder and hip. Two girls escaped un-

Serb police in Trnovo, 20 miles (32 kilometres) south of Sarajevo, said it was the third kidnapping in two months. Two other Serbs are missing, they said, and another has been located in a Sarajevo jail.

"This is the worst incident we've seen in the three months we've been here, and it's a bad one," said Lt Nicolas Guisse, "No question, everyone is going to be tense after this."

The NATO-led peace force could not confirm the earlier incidents, and police from the Muslim-Croat federation could not be reached from comment.

Bosnian Muslim police said they feared reprisals. A senior officer, who declined to give his name, said reinforcements would protect Muslim hamlets scattered in the heavily forested cash-strapped young people avoid the steep cost of marriage ceremonies. - AFP/UNB photo

Off the Record



presents her autobiography "Moi, Phoolan Devi, reine des bandits" (My name is Phoolan Devi, Bandit Queen), written by French writer Marie- Therese Cuny from hundreds of hours of interviewing, in a Parisian restaurant Friday. - AFP/UNB photo

Human like affinity of elephants

SILIGURI: In the dog-eats-dog world of animals, elephants dying to save the life of another elephant sounds like a tale told from the book of human sacrifice. But that is exactly what happened at a village in Jalpaiguri district on Friday, report

Officials here said that a her of 30 wild elephants was roaming near the Teesta Barrage at Gajaladoba village when it spotted a young pachyderm struggling in the river. Some of them immediately jumped in the swirling waters but were themselves caught in the vortex. At least four elephants were

washed away. Local people then raised an alarm and forced the barrage authorities to close the sluice gate and saved the elephants including the young one.

Now it's time to import brides

KAOHSIUNG, Taiwan: Taiwan, upset that so many of its men are marrying foreigners, is cracking down. And the men, who say Taiwanese women are too finicky and not obedient enough.

are in an uproar, reports AP. New quotas are designed to slow the influx of foreign brides - and boost the marriage prospects of Taiwanese women. To the 100 men who crammed into county headquarters in the southern city of Kaohsiung last week, the quotas constitute an

"inhuman policy" They have formed an Association for the Promotion of Marriage Rights to lobby against the quotas.

"Some men have looked in vain for a wife for 20 years and are getting old," said Yeh Fa-Tsung, whose mainland Chinese bride will have to wait 10 years to settle in Taiwan. "How can the government deprive them of their last chance?"

The government maintains that the flood of brides from China, Vietnam, Indonesia and elsewhere in Asia will lead to trouble. It claims ethnically mixed marriages are prone to collapse, and that Taiwanese women's marriage prospects are diminishing.

Yeh, 40 says the women have only themselves to blame: "Many women would rather remain single than marry someone inferior to them.

Clashes leave 14 killed

BOGOTA, Colombia, Sept 7: At least 14 soldiers and policemen were killed in clashes with leftist rebels in central and southern Colombia on Friday. officials and military sources

said, reports Reuter. They said the worst fighting occurred in a rural area of southeastern Guaviare province where 10 to 15 soldiers were killed in an apparent ambush by Revolutionary Armed Forces

of Colombia (FARC) guerillas. a remote part of the jungle-covered province known as La capital.

last, the Kremlin lifted the lid on Boris Yeltsin's health secrets - then promptly snapped it shut again, reports AP,

The ailing Russian president broke with years of tight-lipped tradition by admitting that he'll undergo heart surgery later this month and calling for a new era of openness on the taboo topic of a Russian leader's

But on Friday, a day after his nationally televised announcement, the Kremlin has reverted to its old ways by refusing to reveal what kind of operation Yeltsin will undergo or where it will be conducted or even who will be'in charge in . talking. Everyone from secre-

The prospect of complex and

economic troubles and political

Cardiology Research Centre director Dr. Yevgeny Chazov, who for years helped keep Lebnid Brezhnev alive, told the Interfax news agency that tests on Yeltsin showed "an operation on the coronary vessels is

recommended" but that his heart's mitral valve would not elaborate. It's expected that the operation will take place at the renowned clinic, but no one was

taries to surgeons nervously de-

clined to discuss the matter.

One prominent cardiologist was about to explain the procedure when he was interrupted by a colleague and promptly

Six hundred Egyptian couples celebrate a mass wedding party in a hockey stadium in Cairo

Yeltsin's health: Kremlin reverts to

Friday under the patronage of First Lady Suzanne Mubarak. The ceremony was to help

two months aides have insisted Yeltsin just hand a cold. They had no more details this week.

nost championed by Yeltsin in Thursday's interview: "I want us to have a society of truth. We been concealed before.

including Yeltsin.

Brezhenv's declining health was for years a matter of speculation and jokes. Earlier this century, the Imperial Family went to great lengths to conceal the hemophilia suffered by Alexei, the only son of Nicholas II. Russia's last czar.

When Yeltsin was hospitalised with the first of two bouts of heart trouble last year. a photograph of him was released to the press to allay publie fears. It turned out the photo had been taken three months

Another "cold" - the term concealing Brezhnev's and other Soviet leaders' illnesses kept Yeltsin out of office for several weeks in 1994.

After Yeltsin ordered troops into breakaway Chechnya in Décember 1994, he suddenly disappeared for what was announced to be nose surgery and was in recovery for a suspi-

Three weeks ago, while Yeltsin was at the Cardiology Center undergoing extensive tests, his office didn't mention the procedure. It instead released the president's new list of

Cabinet members. It is not known who will run only states that the prime min-

chief, Alexander Lebed, called for the president to turn over his power to Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin. Without a transfer of author

ity, a nasty political clash could develop behind the Kremlin walls, likely involving Chernomyrdin, Lebed and presidential chief of staff Anatoly Chubais.

One of Yeltsin's fiercest foes. Communist Party head Gennady Zyuganov, called for an urgent meeting of government and political leaders to work out steps against possible "destabilisation."

The Communists might be seeking proof that Yeltsin is unable to govern, which would entail new elections. Zyuganov lost to Yeltsin in runoff presidential vote this summer.

NATO to admit new members from east Europe in 2000 STUTTGART, Germany, Sept

7: The United States has tried to put new momentum into NA-TO's post-Cold War transformation by formally proposing that a NATO summit in 1997 should approve an alliance charter with Russia. reports It has also signaled more

explicitly than before its hope that NATO will admit new members from Eastern Europe in the year 2000. "Let me share with you the

vision that president Clinton and I have for the United States and Europe in the year 2000. It is a vision for a 'new Atlantic community." US Secretary of State Warren Christopher said in a major speech on Friday.

in Colombia

Guaviare Gov Juan Carlos Medina confirmed the attack in Carpa, about three hours by riverboat from the provincial

risky surgery and what might MOSCOW, Sept 7: At long be a long recuperation period has raised fears of instability in a country still wracked by

rivalries.

have to be replaced. He did not

hung up the phone. The dramatic news about the surgery provoked a similarly deafening silence from Yeltsin's administration. For the past

It was hardly the neo-glasshould not conceal what has

overnight Russia's centuries-

old policy of secrecy surround-

earlier.

Of course, the Kremlin . favoured by Soviet spindoctors couldn't expect to reverse ing the health of its leaders -

clously long two weeks.

the country while Yeltsin undergoes the operation and recovers from it. The constitution ister takes over if the president dies or is permanently incapac-

Yeltsin's national security