

BRIEFLY

Gore may visit China if reflected: US Vice President Al Gore may visit China next spring if he and Bill Clinton are re-elected, a senior US official said Saturday. AP reports from Beijing.

If it takes place, Gore's would be the highest level visit by a US official since US President George Bush's trip in February 1989. Gore would travel to China for a meeting of a forum on sustainable development, said Eileen B Claussen, US assistant secretary of state for oceans and international environmental and scientific affairs.

FARC attack jail, free 41 inmates: The leftist Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) on Saturday attacked a jail in the southwestern state of Putumayo and freed 41 prisoners, prison authorities said. AFP reports from Bogota.

One prison guard was injured in the attack, which took place in the town of Mocoa. Seven prisoners were later recaptured by police.

3 more die of dengue in Delhi: The dengue fever toll has risen to 273 with three more deaths reported in New Delhi, capital of India, in the past 24 hours. Xinhua reports from New Delhi.

The number of total reported cases is 6,999. 194 more cases have been reported to different hospitals in the city. Hospital sources said here yesterday. The Director-General of Health Services has been asked to depute teams of experts to the peripheral areas of the capital to oversee the dengue cases there. Each team will include a public health expert from the National Institute of Communicable Diseases as well as medicine and child specialists from union government hospitals in the city.

Vote counting begins in Malta: Vote counting began overnight in Malta after general elections Saturday marked by a high turnout. AFP reports from Valetta.

No official estimate of the turnout has been given up to now, but the rightwing ruling Nationalist Party said that according to its count, 97.2 per cent of the island's 274,925 voters had cast their ballots. If confirmed, this would even beat the high turnout of 96.4 per cent recorded in the last general election in 1992.

Plane mishap kills 5 in Siberia: Five people were killed and 15 injured Saturday when a Russian Yak-40 airliner made an emergency landing in Siberia, the Interfax News Agency reported. AFP reports from Moscow.

Its report was based on a provisional toll from the Russian Ministry of Defense. Emergencies and Natural Disasters. The accident, at Khaty-Mansyisk Airport, occurred at 8:48 pm (1448 GMT) as the aircraft — for as yet unknown reasons — hit two helicopters on the runway as it was trying to land.

Yemeni tribe frees French diplomat: A French diplomat, kidnapped by a Yemeni tribe last weekend, was freed on Saturday, said the authorities in Maqrif province, 180 kilometers (110 miles) east of Sanaa, where he was held. AFP reports from Sanaa.

The hostage was freed and turned over to mediators. He now is on the way to Maqrif City, an official of the Maqrif governor's office told AFP. He asserted that the diplomat — whose name has not disclosed since his abduction last Sunday — was in a safe condition, and that he would be taken on to the French Embassy in Sanaa, Yemen's capital.

Iran frees 150 Iraqi POWs: Iraq said on Saturday that its former Iranian had freed 150 Iraqi prisoners who had been jailed since their 1980-1988 war. Reuter reports from Baghdad.

But the official Iraqi News Agency (INA), quoting a statement by Iraq's foreign ministry, said Baghdad wanted Iraq to account for thousands more POWs.

"Iraq, while it highly appreciates the initiative, stresses that Iran is still detaining 20,000 Iraqi POWs registered by the International Committee of the Red Cross," INA quoted the statement as saying.

Voting begins in Bulgaria: Voters went to the polls Sunday in presidential elections marked by the worst economic crisis since 1989, when communism collapsed. AFP reports from Sofia.

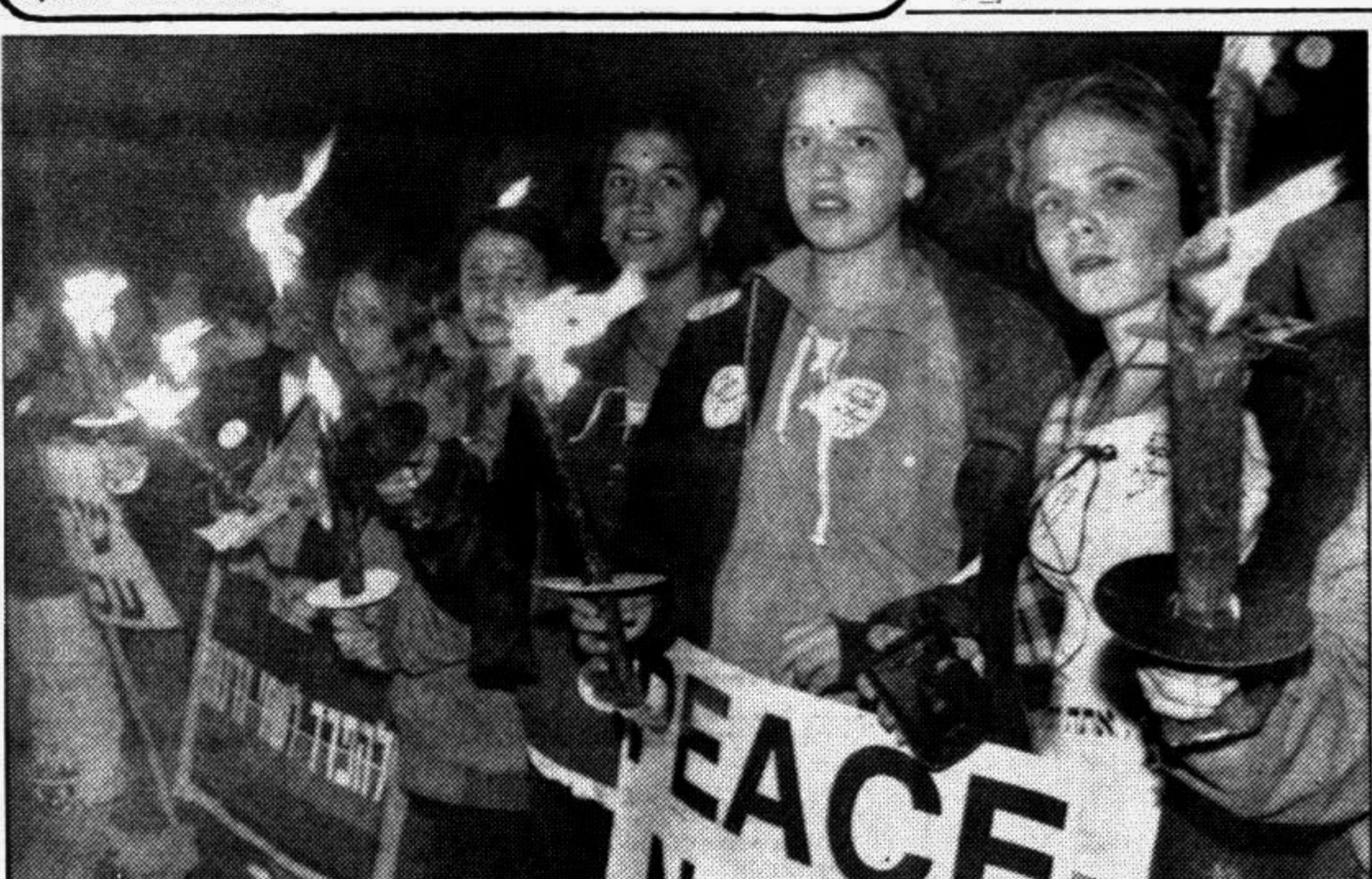
Polls opened at 6 am (0400 GMT) and were to close at 7 pm (1700 GMT). Some 6.7 million people were eligible to vote in this Balkan nation of 8.4 million people.

Initial projections were expected Sunday evening and final results Monday.

Heroin seized, 14 held in Myanmar: Myanmar's troops have located two refineries and arrested 14 people in heroin raids near the country's border with China. state-controlled media reported Sunday. AP says from Yangon.

The New Light of Myanmar said that a tip-off resulted in military raids Oct 10 and 15 on two heroin refineries in northern Shan State, long a lawless region known as one of the world's major opium-growing areas.

Troops seized five kilograms of heroin and 4,389 liters (1,155 gallons) of chemicals, including chloroform, methylated spirit and acetic anhydride used in the process of turning opium into heroin.



Thousands of Israeli peace demonstrators hold a human chain in center Jerusalem to the late Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin grave on mount Herzl Saturday. They call the Israeli government for an immediate withdrawal from Hebron, under the slogan "follow Rabin peace policy." — AFP/UNB photo

Myanmar rulers banned from visiting EU countries

LUXEMBOURG, Oct 27: Myanmar's military rulers will be banned from visiting European Union countries under a package of largely symbolic sanctions to be adopted by EU foreign ministers here today, reports AFP.

The move, aimed at stepping up international pressure on the junta, comes against a background of growing international concern over the de facto house arrest of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and the detention of one of her top aides.

The sanctions will require EU governments to turn down visa applications from members of the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) or their senior military and security officials.

An arms embargo covering munitions and military equipment.

If Bill Clinton's vote were a

Clinton plans final-week tug for Democratic Congress

WASHINGTON, Oct 27: President Clinton plans a final-week tug for Democratic Congress just as more Republicans urge voters to keep that party in power in the legislative branch as a check on a second Clinton term, reports AP.

Clinton's efforts to help Democrats out the ballot will be evident more in action than words. Wary of reminding voters why they stripped Democrats of their congressional majorities just two years ago, the president rarely puts in a direct plug for a Democratic Congress.

Indeed, many Republicans in tight races are arguing that progress in reducing the deficit and reforming welfare would be at risk if Democrats regained control of Congress. These Republicans recall the tax increases and big-government health care plan advocated in the first two years of Clinton's term.

"Don't turn back the clock," was the final-week slogan for Republican candidates suggested in memo from Republican pollster Frank Luntz to House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott.

But Clinton's travel in the final week will overlap with many races critical if Democrats are to get the 19-seat House and four-seat Senate gains needed to regain majorities. Republicans entered the stretch suggesting things were breaking their way — in part because of Clinton's big lead in the presidential race.

If Bill Clinton's second-

vote of enthusiasm, then Republicans in the House and Senate would be in big trouble," Republican pollster Neil Newhouse said. "But many voters don't trust him. So it leaves them wide open to a pitch to balance their vote at the top with a vote for Republicans for Congress."

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