

# International

## BRIEFLY

### Mother Teresa improving

Mother Teresa's condition had greatly improved a day after she was admitted to hospital following heart failure, a doctor attending her told AFP Saturday in Calcutta.

There was a crisis on Thursday night when we went to see her," Dinamani Banerjee, one of five experts attending the 86-year-old missionary told AFP over telephone.

"But she has fully recovered from the episode," he said. "She has overcome the crisis."

### 2 Russian border guards killed in Dushanbe

Unidentified gunmen opened fire with Grenade launchers and automatic rifles on a bus carrying Russian border guards in the Tajik capital Dushanbe on Friday, killing two servicemen and wounding six. Reuters reports from Dushanbe.

"They've done this to scare us," said a Russian officer at the scene who declined to be identified. Shattered glass covered the site of the attack which was cordoned off by Tajik and Russian security forces.

### 10 die in Nigeria road mishap

Ten people died and 17 others were seriously injured in a four-vehicle crash in Agbala, in Nigeria's eastern Imo state, the official News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reported Friday. AFP reports from Lagos.

The accident happened Monday when a bus collided with a lorry. Another bus which tried to avoid the accident, hit a parked vehicle at the scene of the accident, witnesses told NAN.

### Top adviser to Danish PM removed

The top adviser to Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen was removed from his position Friday. No reason was given for the departure of Ulrik Federspiel, but it was widely believed to be connected to embarrassment over the handling of a visit by Salman Rusdie, AP reports from Copenhagen.

"Ulrik Federspiel and I have agreed that Ulrik Federspiel leaves his position today as department chief in Denmark's State Ministry," Nyrup Rasmussen said in a statement.

### Rains kill 20 in C America

Driving rains that have been lashing Central America and the western Caribbean for days have left a total of at least 20 people dead, authorities said Friday. AFP reports from San Jose.

In Central America, 19 people have been killed and some 80,000 people have been made homeless by the flooding and storm damage. Honduras was hardest hit there with seven deaths reported and 60,000 homeless and material damage worth millions of dollars.

### UNSCOM chief arrives in Kuwait

The chief of the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) for the disarmament of Iraq arrived in Kuwait City Friday at the start of a Gulf tour. Kuwait's official news agency KUNA reported. AFP reports from Kuwait City.

"UNSCOM is not yet satisfied with the progress achieved in its operations in Iraq," Rolf Ekeus told KUNA on arrival accusing Baghdad of failing to meet its obligations under UN resolution which ended the 1991 Gulf War.

### Landslide claims 7 in Brazil

Seven people died and another eight injured Friday when six homes were crushed under a landslide in the city of Aracruz civil defence officials said. AFP reports from Rio de Janeiro.

Some 200 people were evacuated from their homes in Aracruz some 400 kilometers (248 miles) north of Rio for fear that the torrential rain had caused the area could cause further landslides officials said.

### FBI director off to KSA

FBI Director Louis Freeh left Friday for Saudi Arabia for talks on the investigation into the June 25 bombing at a US military housing complex that killed 19 Americans the FBI said. AFP reports from Washington.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation gave few details on the trip. Freeh's third to Saudi Arabia except to say that it was at the invitation of the Saudi government and "part of an ongoing effort to solve this crime."

### Blast claims 23 in Puerto Rico

At least 23 people were killed and some 39 more were feared buried Friday beneath the rubble of a six-story building fell by an explosion believed to have been caused by a gas leak. AFP reports from San Juan.

Police aided by search dogs uncovered the body of one woman amid shattered glass and mangled wreckage of wood and concrete.

## Donors, Rwandan officials meet to coordinate relief efforts

GENEVA, Nov 23. Western aid chiefs, donors and Rwandan government officials met in Geneva today to coordinate relief efforts for more than half a million Rwandan Hutu refugees who poured back home from eastern Zaire, reports Reuters.

"We all worked very hard to get the refugees back to Rwanda and we'll help Rwanda rebuild a country with all its people," United Nations refugee agency UNHCR chief Sadako Agata told reporters at the start of the one-day talks, also attended by senior West European and US aid officials.

The meeting is chaired by Canada's International Cooperation Minister Don Boudria and attended by high-level representatives from European donor countries, including French State Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs Xavier Emmanuelli.

Also participating are US agency for International Development (USAID) chief Brian Atwood and International Committee of the Red Cross president Cornelio Sommaruga.

The closed-door talks started as an international meeting of military commanders in Stuttgart, Germany, to discuss a possible armed intervention force to bring aid to Rwandan and Burundian refugees in Zaire had to be extended to Saturday amidst confusion over how many people

need help, and where they are.

Lieutenant-General Maurice Baril of Canada, which is coordinating the UN authorised mission, told a news conference in Stuttgart that estimates varied between 100,000 and 500,000. These figures are below UNHCR estimates of more than 700,000 refugees.

Meanwhile a meeting of military commanders to discuss an armed intervention force to bring aid to Rwandan and Burundian refugees in Zaire has had to be extended to Saturday, amidst confusion over how many people need help and where they are.

But efforts to find refugees lost in Zaire were hampered further when rebels stopped UN agencies entering a large area in the east of the country on Friday.

Even when the military operations have been drawn up, participating countries will have to take a political decision to deploy the force which will require another international meeting, Canadian Defence Minister Doug Young said on Friday.

He said in Ottawa it was obvious that there is still a need for humanitarian aid, but he could not say when political leaders would meet to decide if armed intervention was necessary to get food to the refugees.

Another report says the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) said on Friday it was

sending an advance team of experts to Rwanda to help coordinate emergency agricultural help for refugees and displaced people in Central Africa.

FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf will lead the team whose brief is to assess the needs of people in Rwanda, Burundi and eastern Zaire.

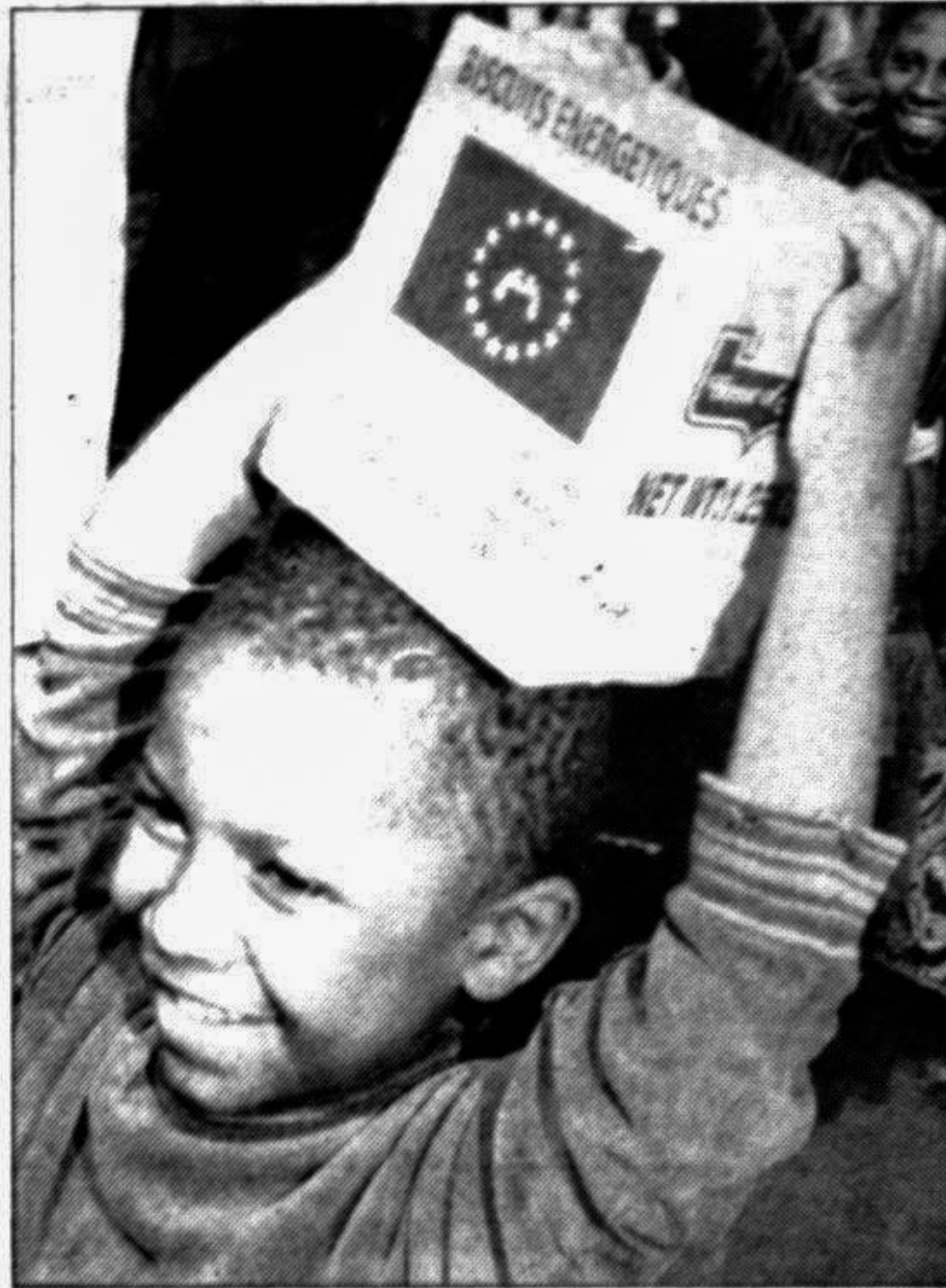
The team will coordinate aid for more than a million people in the three countries.

Another report from Goma adds. Great confusion still surrounds the whereabouts of an estimated 700,000 refugees missing in eastern Zaire despite satellite pictures, a senior UN refugee agency (UNHCR) official said on Friday.

Ray Wilkinson told reporters that UNHCR staff were being prevented by Zairean rebels from leaving Goma, near the border with Rwanda, to seek the refugees and that rebel commander Andre Kasheba had declared the area a military zone.

An estimated half a million Rwandan Hutu refugees have poured out of eastern Zaire back into Rwanda since Zairean rebels put to flight extremist Hutu militia who were controlling vast refugee camps near the Zairean border town of Goma.

But last week's torrent has slowed to a trickle and some 700,000 refugees, both Rwandan and Burundian Hutus, are still unaccounted for in eastern Zaire — from abandoned camps



Snsenga Samuel, a Rwandan refugee who fled the Kahindo refugee camp in Zaire with his mother three weeks ago, leaves the UNHCR food distribution centre with a box of cookies Friday at the Akkar transit camp, near Ruhengeri, 70 km from Gisenyi. — AFP/UNB photo

## PA calls on Palestinians to 'defend their lands'

GAZA CITY, Nov 23. The Palestinian Authority called on Palestinians Friday to 'defend their lands against Jewish settlers in a campaign against Israeli expansion of settlements in the West Bank, reports AFP.

The Palestinian people are called upon to defend their land from the settlers who are encouraged by the Netanyahu government, the authority's Cabinet Secretary Ahmed Rahman told journalists in Gaza City.

The Palestinian farmer will not stand alone in this confrontation. We will provide all possible financial, moral and political support to Palestinians in all villages and cities

and in Jerusalem he said. He warned that Israel's policy of expanding Jewish settlements will close the door to peace and open the door to more tension and confrontation between the Israelis and Palestinians.

Abdel Rahman spoke following a weekly cabinet meeting with President Yasser Arafat in which new Israeli settlement plans topped the agenda.

Israel plans to spend 300 million dollars to expand Jewish settlements and build road in the West Bank. Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem in 1997, a 50 per cent jump over the 1996 budget according to the Israeli group peace now.

## Thatcher warns against revival of socialism

LONDON, Nov 23. Former Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher burst back on the political stage on Friday to warn against a revival of socialism in Britain, Europe and the world, reports Reuters.

In a characteristically forthright speech she attacked Britain's opposition Labour Party as closest socialists and said the European Union's core members seemed bent on creating a bureaucratic socialist superstate.

"We have to appreciate that socialism is not dead, it is not even asleep, it is visibly stirring, she said.

Thatcher's aides billed her speech as important and her intervention will stroke fires in the British political scene, already hotting up ahead of an election that must be held by

next May and driven by disputes over Europe.

"We may well be approaching one of those rare occasions in our affairs when a small deviation to right or left brings huge rewards or the gravest dangers," Thatcher, Prime Minister from 1979-1990, said in a lecture in London.

Thatcher was polite but not effusive about her successor John Major saying he showed persistence, imagination and skill in pushing the free market strategy for transforming Britain she pursued for 11 years until ousted in a party coup.

She warned that while Labour appears to have borrowed from Conservative policies to move to the political centre it would fail to nurture the free market if elected.

## Khartoum to lobby to block UN ban Clinton bans Sudanese officials' entry into US

PORT DOUGLAS, Australia, Nov 23: Members of the Sudanese government and armed forces have been banned from entering the United States US President Bill Clinton said here today, reports AFP.

Clinton said in a decree issued here that this was due to Khartoum's failure to abide by UN Security Council resolutions ordering the extradition to Ethiopia of three men accused of attempting to kill Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

A failed bid to assassinate the Egyptian leader was made in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa in June 1995. The decree is effective immediately.

The decree cited the "refusal" of the government of Sudan to comply with resolution 1044, saying the banning was in furtherance of a second resolution, 1064.

The entry into the United States as immigrants and non-immigrants of members of the government of Sudan, officials of that government and members of the Sudanese armed forces is hereby suspended.. effective immediately.

The categories of people barred from travelling are the same as those targeted by resolution 1054.

AP adds, Sudan said Friday that it will lobby UN members to block efforts to impose air sanctions against the state.

The Security Council said Thursday that it would postpone any decision on imposing an air ban for a month and examine what impact the measure would have on the impoverished east African nation.

## Police-Maoist clashes leave 60 dead in Nepal

KATHMANDU, Nov 23: More than 60 people were killed in Nepal in clashes between police and Maoists, who launched an insurgency in February against the present democratic set up, a Home Ministry spokesman said today, reports AFP.

The ultra-leftists, who swear by the 'people's war' idea of late Chinese leader Mao Zedong, are opposed to Nepal's current multi-party system with a constitutional monarchy. They seek to replace it with a government of the working class.

"Over 40 people were killed in police crossfire, some 15 innocent people and 4 policemen were shot dead, among many others injured by the Maoist militia," spokesman Gopendra Bahadur Pandey said.

He said, "adequate and effective security measures have been taken" to deal with the heightened Maoist activity and added that "constant vigilance" would be maintained.

## Iraq yet to give acceptable account of missiles: Ekeus

KUWAIT, Nov 23: The UN official in charge of destroying Iraq's deadliest weapons has expressed concern that Baghdad has not given an acceptable account of its missiles or biological and chemical arms capabilities, reports Reuters.

"What we have not achieved is to have a satisfactory account of missiles which Iraq may be keeping or an account biological and chemical weapon capabilities, so we are still concerned," the official Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) quoted Rolf Ekeus as saying upon arrival in Kuwait on Friday night.

Ekeus will brief the UN Security Council on Iraq's refusal to allow its arms experts to transport missile parts for inspection, KUNA reported.

## Democratic Party to return donations from Asian sources

WASHINGTON, Nov 23: The Democratic Party of US President Bill Clinton announced Friday it would return a further 450,000 dollars in questionable campaign donations from Asian sources, report AP.

The Democratic National Committee, at the centre of widening allegations of questionable fundraising during the campaign season which ended with Clinton's reelection on November 5 admitted no wrongdoing in accepting the vast sum from Indonesian couple Arief and Soraya Wiradinda in 1995 and 1996.

"When questions were raised about the legality of the contributions were checked the law and confirmed that the contributions were legal," DNC spokesman Amy Weiss Tobe said.

## Protest against govt continues in Belgrade

BELGRADE, Nov 23: Around 10,000 people braved heavy rain to march through Belgrade Friday, in a sixth consecutive day of anti-government protests, after the authorities cancelled election results which showed opposition gains, reports AP.

The protest was headed by key opposition figure Luk Draskovic, the Democratic Party leader Zoran Djindjic and Vesna Pesic, head of the Civic Alliance.

Police kept a discreet watch on the proceedings, and armed guards were posted around the Serbian Parliament and the television building.

## Panama rules out extension of US bases

PANAMA CITY, Nov 23: In his first official comments in a year on the future of the American military here, President Ernesto Perez Balladrea promised his party that Panama will be free of foreign bases beginning next century, reports AP.

The United States and Panama are engaged in off-and-on talks on a possible extension of the leases for US bases, which run out at the end of the decade. While each side separately has hinted at an American pullout, the question is still unresolved.

## Off the Record

### Handwork of a genius, or Van Gogh?

PARIS: It isn't a typical Van Gogh. The colours are right — iris blues, spring greens and golden yellows. But the abstract perspective and brush strokes have none of the artist's usual realistic touches — a fence, a rooftop or a church spire, reports AP.

The "Jardin d'Auvers", which goes on the auction block December 9, has some experts at odds. Is it an elaborate fake? Or is it the handwork of a genius?

For the second time in four years the painting is up for sale, but it's the first time authenticity has been a question. The Paris art world has been abuzz with speculation since the summer, when a respected French critic noted discrepancies concerning the painting's original owner.

The world's leading Van Gogh scholars have insisted — repeatedly — that Van Gogh made the small landscape in the creative frenzy leading up to his suicide in 1890. It also is widely held that Van Gogh's sister-in-law was the painting's first owner.

But critic Jean-Marie Tasset cited research showing that "Jardin" belonged to the brother of Claude-Emile Schuffenecker. And Schuffenecker had a reputation as a second-rate artist with a talent for copying successful artists — including Van Gogh.

The curator at Amsterdam's Van Gogh Museum declares the painting is "absolutely" the real thing. "We're aware of the controversy," Sjraar van Heugten says. "We reviewed all the material and have concluded that there's been mix-up of facts."

### Widow barred from using husband's sperm!

LONDON: Regulators have again barred a widow from using her late husband's sperm to become pregnant, but she says she will continue the fight to have his child, reports AP.

Late last month, regulators agreed to reconsider their 1995 ruling banning Diane Blood from using the sperm of her dead husband. This followed a High Court decision on October 17 upholding the regulators' ruling that under British law, the sperm could not be used because Stephen Blood had not given his written consent.

Blood died in March 1995 after contracting bacterial meningitis and falling into a coma. While he was comatose and on a life-support machine, Mrs Blood asked doctors to take samples of his sperm, which now are stored at a hospital in Sheffield, 160 miles (250 kms) north of London.

In a statement Thursday night, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority said Mrs Blood's lawyers had been told that the ban had been upheld and she would not be allowed to take the sperm abroad for treatment in another country.

### Hermitage to display treasures looted by Red Army

MOSCOW: Another cache of art treasures looted by the victorious Red Army at the end of World War II is going on display at the Hermitage museum in St. Petersburg, reports AP.

Like last year's sensational exhibition of French masterpieces, most of the works in the show were believed lost in the war.

The exhibition, which opens December 3, is sure to cause excitement in the art world and rekindle the simmering controversy over ownership.

The show carefully entitled "Master Drawings Revisited: Treasures from Prewar German Collections," includes works by such master as Paul Cezanne, Vincent van Gogh, Francisco Goya and Eugene Delacroix.

A handful of works were to be unveiled Friday at a news conference at the Hermitage. In New York, publisher Harry F. Abrams Inc. unveiled the glossy catalog.

Paul Gottlieb, president and publisher of Abrams, vividly recalls the first time he saw the works, in the spring of 1995. It was in a huge room at the top of the Hermitage.

Many of the watercolours, drawings and gouaches in the new show come from the same collections

## Yeltsin signs decree ordering troop withdrawal from Chechnya

MOSCOW, Nov 23: Ending a dispute between Moscow and Chechen separatists, President Boris Yeltsin signed a decree Saturday ordering the two remaining Russian brigades to be withdrawn from Chechnya, reports AP.

Under a peace agreement reached between the two sides in August, all Russian troops were to be pulled out by the end of the year. But until now Russian officials have insisted that the two brigades were permanently based in the separatist republic and would remain there.

Separatist leaders have demanded that the brigades be withdrawn, saying their presence would obstruct plans to hold elections in Chechnya in January.

Yeltsin's decree, released by his press service to Russian news agencies, said the brigades will be withdrawn "to guarantee the further peaceful settlement in the Chechen republic, the demilitarisation of the Chechen republic" and to create conditions for democratic elections.

The president ordered the Interior Ministry's 101st brigade and the Defence Ministry's 205th motorized brigade to be re-deployed elsewhere in the north Caucasus region and told

the Russian government to take steps to provide housing for the troops and their families.

Yeltsin's decree appeared to be part of a new agreement to be signed soon by Russian and Chechen heads of government.

Russian national security chief Iwan Rybkin met on Friday with Chechen separatist leaders to fine-tune the wording of the new agreement. And Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin's office announced Saturday morning that he and Aslan Maskhadov, the Chechen government head, planned to meet later in the day in Moscow.

## 'Results of Referendum made mandatory' Lukashenko cancels deal with Belarus parliament

MINSK, Nov 23: President Alexander Lukashenko has cancelled his half of a Russia-brokered political deal with the Belarus parliament because deputies failed to approve it, an aide said today, reports Reuters.

"In connection with the fact that parliament and the Constitutional Court have not fulfilled their obligations while the president has fulfilled his fully, this agreement cannot go into force. So the results of the referendum (on extending presidential powers) will be mandatory," said Mikhail Podgany, head of the Information Department in the presidential administration, said.

Under the deal, Lukashenko had agreed to make the November 24 referendum in which he is seeking to widen his powers consultative rather than legally binding.

In return, parliament agreed to drop impeachment proceedings against the president, but the deal ran into trouble almost as soon as it was signed at dawn on Friday, mediated by Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin.

Deputies failed four times late on Friday to approve the accord despite strong pressure from Lukashenko.

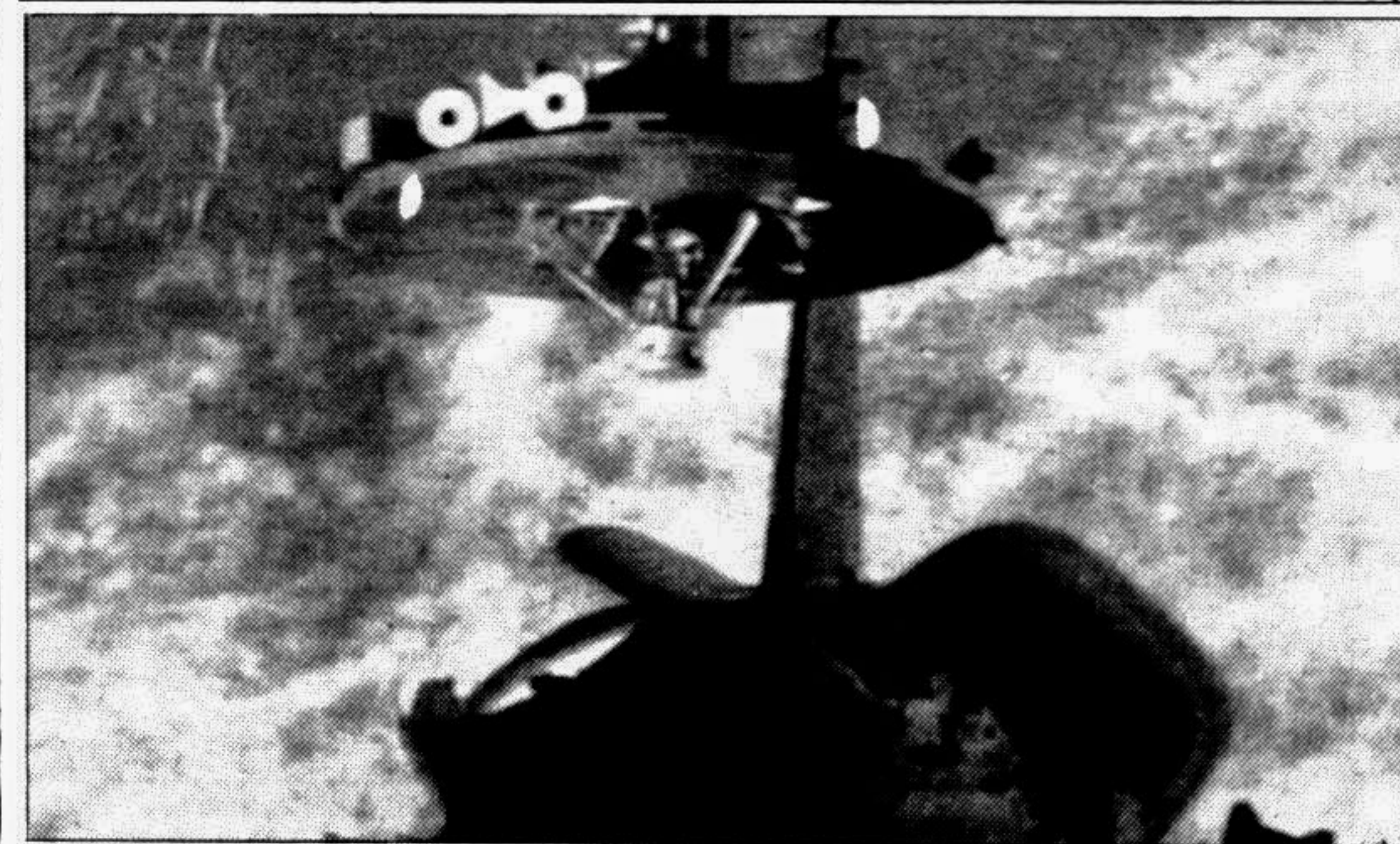
Opposition deputies were worried Lukashenko would be able to press on with plans to change the constitution after the referendum as he will have a majority on a special com-

mission which will create a new draft based on the results of voting.

Meanwhile, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko ponders his next move today in his confrontation with the opposition-dominated parliament over a controversial referendum due next day.

Lukashenko wants to use the referendum to tighten his grip on rival institutions and extend his term by more than two years — an idea fiercely opposed by parliament.

AP adds, even before the days was out, a deal reached to end the feud that has Belarus parliament threatening to impeach the president appeared in jeopardy.



The Wake Shield satellite is held by the Space Shuttle Columbia's robot arm Friday as it is lifted out of the cargo bay prior to release. The satellite will be released to fly free of the shuttle while it grows crystals and then retrieved. — AFP/UNB photo

## AI warns Asia-Pacific leaders against ignoring HR to pursue free trade

MANILA, Nov 23: Amnesty International today warned Asia-Pacific leaders against ignoring human rights in their zeal to pursue free trade, amid alarming reports of labour rights violations in Asia, reports AFP.

Economic development arising from increased trade among members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum "should occur hand in hand with human rights," said Amnesty Executive Committee member Ross Daniels.

Leaders of APEC members, an informal grouping of 18 economies bordering the Pacific, are to meet here Monday to adopt an action plan to lower tariffs and open markets to free trade by 2020.

"We're simply not prepared to trust the untested assumption the leaders are saying that when we all walk together the

sun's going to shine and all people will be happy," Daniels said at a news conference.

Amnesty issued a statement urging APEC to ensure their economic policies "promote all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights for all members of society."

Daniels warned that human rights in APEC member economies such as China, Indonesia, Malaysia and South Korea were being threatened because of their government's interpretation of human rights.

"For them, human rights are a matter for a sovereign nation. They said 'it (APEC) is a done deal and we will do what we need to stifle human rights issues,'" Daniels said.

An Amnesty report cited cases of physical and sexual abuse and harsh working conditions of migrant workers in

Malaysia and the imprisonment of trade union leaders in South Korea who had helped negotiate with management for better pay.

It also cited human rights violations in the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya, where it said security forces had killed 22 civilians and 15 activists protesting a mining operation there in 1995.

Amnesty said there had been recent cases of harassment and detention of labour activists in China and inhuman working conditions in special economic zones in its southern region.

"The conditions under which people are working, the casualisation of labour, the feminisation of labour, is increasing," Daniels said.

He criticised a recommendation by a special council of

APEC business executives that called for members to limit the use of unilateral sanctions over trade disputes and renounced its use against members for non-trade issues.

In the past, unilateral sanctions such as embargoes have been used by the United States to protest human rights violations in China.

"When governments agree that we will not criticise one another on human rights issues, that is to be condemned," Daniels said.

Also Saturday, the US-based human rights Watch/Asia criticised the easing of international pressure on China over its human rights record as US President Bill Clinton and Chinese President Jiang Zemin, who arrive here today for the APEC conference, prepared to hold bilateral talks.



US delegation to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting of economic leaders in Manila from left Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky and Secretary of Commerce Michael Kantor chats before the start of the ministerial meeting on Saturday. — AFP/UNB photo