

# BRIEFLY



Miss Thailand, Suangsuda Rodprasert (L), and Donald J. Trump (R), executive producer of the Miss Universe pageant, pose for photographs Friday in Miami Beach, Florida prior to the final competition where one delegate will be crowned Miss Universe 1997. The pageant is scheduled for May 16 in Miami Beach, Florida.

— AFP/UNB photo

**9 killed in Lankan clashes:** At least nine people were killed when government troops and Tamil Tiger rebels clashed in two separate incidents, the military said Sunday. AP reports from Colombo.

Government troops attacked a Tamil rebel group in northern Sri Lanka Saturday, killing at least five of them, said Capt. L S Palihawadana, a military spokesman. One soldier was killed.

In another attack, in the northwestern Mannar district, soldiers shot dead one guerrilla. Two other rebels committed suicide by swallowing cyanide to avoid being captured, Palihawadana said. There were no fatalities among government troops, however.

**Offer for new MRTA leader's arrest:** Peru's police on Saturday offered a 75,000 dollar reward for information leading to the capture of the man they believe could be the Tupac Amaru rebels' new leader after last month's bloody end to the group's hostage-taking, Reuter reports from Lima.

A full-page advertisement in the pro-government daily Express announced the offer would even include a pardon for anyone providing information from their prison cell about Hugo Avellaneda, the group's former international spokesman.

President Alberto Fujimori tipped Avellaneda — the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement's (MRTA) best known member still at large — as the rebel most likely to take control of the group after commandos killed leader Nestor Cerpa in a hostage rescue.

**PWG kills villager in India:** The People's War Group (PWG) naxalites, who gunned down CH Sreenu, brother of Anakapile MP Ayyana Patru on Friday, murdered a villager at Kantaram village near Koyur in Visakhapatnam district while fleeing from the scene. PTI reports from Hyderabad.

Police said the assailants who boarded a bus after murdering Sreenu, on spotting the villager, Kanna Babu dragged him out of the vehicle and shot at him alleging that he was a police informer.

**France hails archbishop Monsengwo:** France on Saturday welcomed archbishop Laurent Pasinya Monsengwo's election as Speaker of Zaire's transition parliament, saying it could help an orderly transfer of power in Kinshasa. Reuter reports from Paris.

"We rejoice in archbishop Monsengwo's election and extend our deepest wishes for the success of his mission," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said. His election appeared to facilitate "an orderly transition in Zaire within an institutional and legal framework."

**Israel probes into land dealer's killing:** Israeli police said on Saturday they were investigating the killing of a Palestinian accused of selling land to Jews, an activity the Palestinian Authority has said is punishable by death. Reuter reports from Jerusalem.

Police spokesman Shmulik Ben-Ruby said Palestinian security forces on Saturday handed the body of east Jerusalem land dealer Farid Bashiti to Israeli authorities for forensic test. Bashiti, 70, was found dead in PLO-ruled Ramallah on Friday.

**Chechens seize 3 journalists:** A television crew of three Russians has been seized by masked Chechen gunmen in the latest in a rash of kidnappings of journalists in the breakaway republic, Russian news reports said Sunday. AP says from Moscow.

Six unidentified gunmen seized the crew from NTV independent television Saturday afternoon near the village of Samashki in western Chechnya, NTV reported. The captors did not immediately announce any demands.

The television station said the journalists — Special correspondent Yelena Masuy, cameraman Ilya Mordukov and sound engineer Dmitry Ulchev — were kidnapped after filming a rally of field commander Salman Raduyev's supporters in the Chechen capital Grozny.

**Ice-cream shop owners jailed in Kabul:** Two ice-cream shop owners have been imprisoned by the purist-Muslim Taliban militia for serving women not wearing the required head-to-toe covering, state-run radio announced today. AP reports from Kabul.

"The owners of two ice-cream shops who had allowed improperly covered women to enter their shops were given two days of punitive imprisonment," the Taliban mouthpiece said.

"These shops were closed for three days and the women were given necessary moral advice," the report said.

## Thai police seize arms belonging to Karen

BANGKOK, May 11: Thai Border Patrol Police have seized a hidden cache of weapons they believe belong to ethnic Karen rebels fighting Myanmar's military government. The Bangkok Post reported Sunday, says AP.

Police found 30 AK-47 rifles, a heavy machine gun, four rocket-propelled grenade launchers and assorted mortar ammunition buried at a hill near the Thai-Myanmar border in Tak province, 370 kilometers (230 miles) northwest of Bangkok.

They believe the weapons belong to the Karen National

## Sharma summons meet of governors, CMs to talk political situation

NEW DELHI, May 11: For the first time, President Dr Shanker Dayal Sharma is convening a meeting of governors, chief ministers and leaders of political parties to discuss how to deal with a situation where no single political party has a clear majority in elections, reports PTI.

The two-day conference to be held from June 2 will discuss the role of constitutional heads in such a situation "as they have to take a decision on their own," official sources said.

The issue to be discussed at the conference would be the role of constitutional heads after elections, particularly when no single party appears to have a clear majority.

Whatever emerges from such a meeting will be used as a base for dealing with any constitutional crisis that may arise in the future, they said.

They recalled the situation in Uttar Pradesh where governor Romesh Bhandari did not

adhere to the practice followed at the centre by Dr Sharma last year who had invited the BJP to form the government at the centre.

Even though the BJP government headed by Atal Behari Vajpeyi remained in office for only 13 days, the practice of calling the single largest party (SLP) was set in motion, the sources said.

Political leaders have also been invited for the conference as they are the main facilitators and the president is the only constitutional head to provide a forum where the governors and political leaders can discuss such issues," the sources said.

The meeting will "mark a watershed in the constitutional and political history of the country, specially in the light of the 50th year of the country's independence being celebrated this year."

## Pakistan undermines quick breakthrough in Indo-Pak peace talks

BANDOS, Maldives, May 11: Pakistan today played down the prospects of a quick breakthrough in peace talks with arch-foe India, saying there could be setbacks and negotiations would take a long time, reports Reuter.

"Expectations should not be built up because unless the groundwork is there, there could be disappointments," Pakistani Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan told reporters on the margins of a meeting of foreign ministers of the South Asian region.

Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his Indian counterpart, Inder Kumar Gujral, were scheduled to hold their first face-to-face talks today at a resort on this Indian Ocean island state.

Sharif was named prime minister in February and Gujral took office three weeks ago. They have exchanged letters expressing their hope that the two longtime rivals could ease tensions.

"Let's hope that something positive comes out, but one has to be very cautious on it. It will be a long, drawn-out negotiation. There will be no quick fix," said Khan, adding that a half-century-old quarrel over Kashmir was Pakistan's core issue.

"Let's hope there are no more wars on Kashmir, but we'll have to negotiate with patience."

The talks between the two leaders today were to take place on the fringes of a summit of

the seven-nation South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in the Maldives.

The two nations launched bilateral negotiations in March after a three-year hiatus marked by tension over the

### 105 killed in China floods

BEIJING, May 11: Flooding from heavy rains has killed at least 105 people in China's southern province of Guangdong and caused damage estimated at 675 million yuan (drs 81 million), state-run media reported, reports AP.

Some 500 government workers had begun providing emergency food, clothing and shelter after the floods burst dikes, destroyed buildings and cut off water, electricity and phone services, the official newspaper Yangcheng Evening News said in a Saturday report seen Sunday in Beijing.

More than 360,000 people had been affected by floods and landslides triggered by the heavy rains, with more than 400 left homeless, it said.

Many of the 105 people killed lived on the outskirts of the provincial capital, Guangzhou. There, flooding killed 91 people and left 75,000 stranded, the report said.

"Because we have to have some understanding, some groundwork and the groundwork is not there yet, and we have reached right up to the prime minister's level."



Portraits of the seven leaders from the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) are displayed on the side of a building in Male. The May 12-14 SAARC summit is being hosted by the Maldives. From left are: Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga; Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif; Nepali Prime Minister Lokendra Bahadur Chand; Maldivian President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom; India Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral; Bhutanese King Jigme Singye Wangchuck; Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed.

— AFP/UNB Photo

## 'Prolonged army presence in Bosnia to help preserve Balkan peace'

WASHINGTON, May 11: Two new congressional reports predict the need for a prolonged military presence in Bosnia to preserve the shaky Balkan peace, reports AP.

The separate reports by the Congressional Research Service and General Accounting Office came Friday a day after the Senate approved a nonbinding measure opposing any funds for the Bosnia troop presence beyond June 1998.

In the CRS report, international security specialist Stanley Sloan wrote that the 30,000-member NATO Stabilization Force, or SFOR, which includes Britain, France and Germany have said that if the United States pulls out its troops, their forces will leave as well.

"Already it is apparent that NATO faces a potential decision-making crisis concerning

what will be done to stabilize Bosnia after SFOR's mandate runs out," Sloan wrote in the CRS report. "It is difficult to find US allied or NATO civilian or military officials who believe that the current objectives of the Dayton Peace Agreement can be met without an external military presence to help enforce the peace beyond June 1998."

Defense Secretary William Cohen has said repeatedly that US ground troops will leave Bosnia. But NATO allies such as Britain, France and Germany have said that if the United States pulls out its troops, their forces will leave as well.

The GAO report, a 127-page study of the Bosnia mission,

reached similar conclusions and said that the pessimism about SFOR's ability to establish a lasting peace extends to US officials.

"Some State and Defense Department officials said... that based on current conditions, they believe some type of international military force will likely be required after SFOR's mission ends," the GAO concluded.

In addition, the GAO detailed dramatic cost increases to the US mission in Bosnia. The latest estimate is that the operation will cost 7.7 billion dollars more than double the original Clinton administration figure. That amount represents more

than half the annual US foreign aid and military assistance budget for the entire world.

The emergency supplemental budget passed Thursday by the Senate and now awaiting House action contains a non-binding measure, approved by voice vote, to prohibit spending on the Bosnia mission after June 1998.

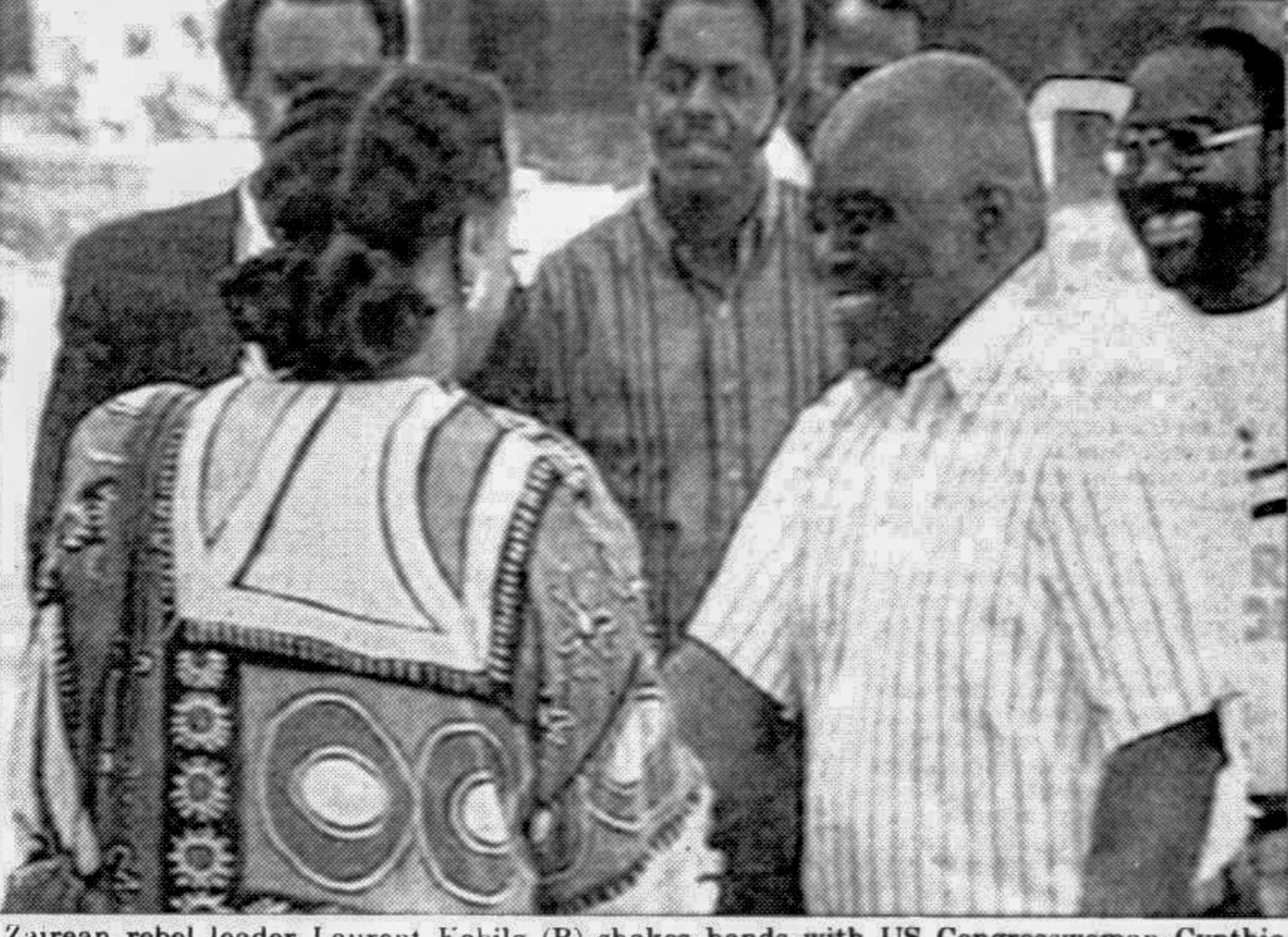
Democratic Sen. Russell Feingold, coauthor of the amendment with Republican Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, said President Clinton's support of extended that the United States would continue to be drawn deeper into a situation from which it has become harder and

harder to extricate itself.

Opponents of the funding restriction said that even a non-binding measure would show allies and foes alike that the United States was unwilling to ensure success of its vast investment in Bosnia.

Sen. Joseph Lieberman, a Democrat, said that cutting off Bosnia funding would be "to walk away, in my opinion, because the job is done."

Democratic Sen. Carl Levin, who also opposed the funding cutoff, said the United States should do more to pressure European allies to establish a peace force that could remain in Bosnia with US logistical support, but not ground troops.



Zairean rebel leader Laurent Kabila (R) shakes hands with US Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney at Lumbumbashi Saturday. Kabila, who announced Saturday that his troops were only 50 kilometers from the capital Kinshasa, said he wanted to resolve things by peaceful dialogue.

— AFP/UNB photo

## Muslim rebels kill 3 Hindus in Kashmir

JAMMU, India, May 11: Muslim separatist guerrillas shot dead three teenaged Hindus after abducting them in Kashmir, the police said here today, reports AFP.

The bullet-ridden bodies of the abducted boys were found Saturday night in the forests of Doda, a mountainous district in Kashmir's southern region, the police said.

They were abducted earlier Saturday by unidentified militants in Doda.

The murders came a day after three more Hindus were shot dead by their abductors in the region.

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Zairean lawmakers voted Roman Catholic Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo to the position of Speaker — who under the

## Mobutu back home, agrees to meet Kabila again

KINSHASA, May 11: Zaire's ailing President Mobutu Sese Seko came home to Kinshasa on Saturday where Parliament filled the vacant post of his constitutional successor, reports Reuter.

At a meeting in Gabon with South Africa's Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, Mobutu agreed Wednesday to talk on board a south African ship with rebel leader Laurent Kabila, whose fighters are no the approaches to the capital.

Both of them have agreed to meet on Wednesday on the boat, Mbeki told reporters in Gabon's capital Libreville on the latest step of a hectic diplomatic shuttle in the region.

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## Gaddafi violates UN air ban for 3rd time in 3 days

TRIPOLI, May 11: Libyan leader Moamer Gaddafi on Saturday violated UN air embargo against Libya for the third time in three days when he flew home from a state visit to Nigeria, officials said, reports AFP.

Libyan television showed pictures of Gaddafi's Libyan Arab Airlines jet taking down in Tripoli to a hero's welcome from a crowd of cheering and chanting supporters gathered on the tarmac.

If they are accurate, this would be a serious violation of United Nations Security Council resolution 748, which prohibits Libyan aircraft from engaging in international flights," State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said.

The US State Department said it planned to raise the matter at the UN Security Council.

## Tories at odds to find successor to Major

LONDON, May 11: In the midst of a six-way battle to find a successor to John Major the Tories face a growing rebellion among its rank and file, unhappy that only the 164 elected deputies can choose a leader, reports AFP.

A Times survey of 80 Tory constituency associations published Saturday, found almost unanimous support for an overhaul of the ground rules to give them a direct say in the choice of leader.

None of the six candidates for the leadership have declared themselves in favour of change, however, current frontrunner William Hague, Stephen Dorrell, Kenneth Clarke, Peter Lilley and Michael Howard have remained silent on the issue.

John Redwood, the other candidate who according to the Guardian newspaper Saturday has the backing of former prime minister Margaret Thatcher, said only that it would be unsuitable for a candidate to try to change the rules in the middle of the game.

Former party chairman, blockbuster novelist Lord (Jeffrey) Archer, was first to raise the issue on Thursday "if they don't change we will be in

the wilderness for year," he said.

On Friday, Robin Hodgson, head of the National Union which is responsible for the voluntary wing of the party, went further, he proposed a change to the election rules which would give local constituencies a 20 per cent share of the vote in leadership contests.

His proposals were backed by another former party chairman Sir Norman Fowler.

Hodgson said that the changes could be introduced by the powerful backbench 1922 committee in time for the election.

The election of a chairman and officers of the 1922 committee is on May 21. They will then organise the leadership election for mid-June.

The party's historian, Lord Blake, told the Times Saturday that the "time for change is long overdue. The National Union was set up in the time of 'Benjamin Disraeli,' who was prime minister in 1887."

"While the members are consulted, they have never had a direct say in the selection of their leader."

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