

# International

## BRIEFLY



A model sports a blue sari designed by Pakistan's Nilofar Shahid who was invited to show some of his creations before Lapidus' 1997-98 fall-winter haute couture collection presented in Paris Monday. — AP/UNB photo

**Rebels kill 51 in Algeria:** As many as 51 people were murdered by suspected Islamic extremists at the weekend during festivities on the 35th anniversary of Algeria's independence, Algerian press reported yesterday, AFP reports from Algiers.

In the Medea region, south of Algiers, 48 villagers were slaughtered, the Daily El Watan said. Three youths had their throats slit overnight Saturday to Sunday in the Algerian capital, several papers reported.

**Scientists identifying Che's bones:** A team of Latin American scientists on Monday began the slow task of identifying what they believe are the bones of legendary guerrilla Ernesto "Che" Guevara, 30 years after he was shot by Bolivian troops, Reuters reports from Santa Cruz.

A skeleton, including a skull which the Cuban scientific team leader said bore the heavy features of the charismatic revolutionary, was taken from a mass grave in a mountain village on Sunday to the east of Bolivian city of Santa Cruz. While Dr Jorge Gonzalez insisted final verification of the remains would take five days, his Cuban, Argentine and Bolivian team members did not hide their optimism that they had found Guevara.

**Manila's bid to ease traffic jams:** Manila officials announced Tuesday a tough new plan to limit the number of cars on the capital's roads and reduce its notorious traffic jams, AP reports from Manila.

Under the new plan, private vehicles will be banned three days a week from the streets of metropolitan Manila's nine cities and eight municipalities between the hours of 7 am and 7 pm.

Vehicles with odd-numbered license plates will be banned on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and even-numbered cars will be prohibited Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Violators will be fined 300 pesos (drls 11.50).

**Quake shakes Indonesia:** An earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 5.9 rocked Indonesia's Sumatra island Monday evening, but there were no immediate reports of damage or casualties, AP reports from Jakarta.

The quake, which struck at 11:24 GMT Monday, was centered under the Indian Ocean about 90 kilometres (56 miles) southwest of Gumugitoli, the Meteorology and Geophysics Agency said Tuesday. Gumugitoli, on an island off the west coast of northern Sumatra, is about 1,250 kilometres (780 miles) northwest of Jakarta.

**12 foreign models held in ROK:** Twelve foreign models have been arrested for working illegally in South Korea while in Seoul on tourist visas, a police official said yesterday, AFP reports from Seoul.

The official at the foreign affairs section of the Seoul metropolitan police agency said all 12 would soon be expelled from the country. "They were working in the country illegally. They came here as tourists and don't have working visas," he said AFP.

## HK drafting bill to deport mainland children

HONG KONG, July 8: Hong Kong government is drafting a bill allowing it to deport mainland children who have right of abode in the territory but who enter illegally, it was reported today, says AFP.

The provisional legislature will be asked to rush through the bill on Wednesday to allow the children to be deported, a government source told the South China Morning Post.

The bill, which is expected to be approved today when Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa meets his Cabinet, the Executive Council, will require mainland children to have a "Certificate of entitlement," from the Special Administrative Region (SAR) before they could claim permanent residency.

The certificate must be obtained before they leave the mainland. Under the current laws, children with a parent who is a full resident of Hong Kong have the right to live here, regardless of where the child was born.

A total of 1,058 people, mostly children and their mothers streamed into the Immigration Department in three days after the founding of the SAR under China on July 1, as rumours spread of an amnesty under the new administration.

Their hopes rose last week when the Immigration Department issued mainland children with temporary identification documents allowing them to stay in Hong Kong pending a decision on their status.

With the present quota system only 150 new arrivals per day are allowed from the mainland to come to live in Hong Kong, leaving an estimated 60,000 children with the right to abode unable to enter the territory.

## LTTE seizes DPRK cargo vessel

COLOMBO, July 8: Tamil Tiger rebels have seized a North Korean registered cargo vessel after it had finished unloading food at a port in northern Sri Lanka, shipping officials said Tuesday, reports AP.

The Morong Bong was returning from Point Pedro harbour when three or four rebels crafts approached it Monday night and took control, said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The vessel, which transports cargo for private traders was last seen heading towards northeastern Mullaitivu where the rebels had a large sea base.

Further details were not immediately available, but the vessel is reported to have a 10 member Northern Korean crew, said the officials.

The rebels, who are fighting for the secession of the northern and eastern provinces for the creation of a Tamil homeland, are under pressure from a government offensive designed to slice through the northern jungles under their control. The six-week-old offensive has been stalled by guerilla counterattacks.

## Tragic

NEW DELHI, July 8: A village girl in India was attacked with acid for deciding to go to college. The Times of India reported Tuesday, says AFP.

Sannathayamma, 20, was sleeping when three men broke into her house and poured acid over her body in the southern state of Karnataka. The police said she could be permanently disfigured. The Times said Sannathayamma, whose family sells milk for a living, was the first woman from her village to join a college of higher education.

"What pains me is that these men just couldn't stomach the idea of a girl going to college," she said, adding she had also been threatened by village elders for complaining to the police against the men.

The Times said one of the attackers had been arrested.

## Japan to help review Indo-Pak stand on CTBT

TOKYO, July 8: Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda who is visiting India and Pakistan later this month, will try to pursue both countries to review their stands on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), government sources said, reports PTL.

He will be the first Japanese Foreign Minister to visit either country in ten years.

The sources said Ikeda would start his visit with Pakistan arriving there on July 21 and reaching India on 23. He will spend two days in each country urging leaders of both countries to review their stands on the CTBT.

India last year refused to sign the CTBT despite international pressure, saying the treaty lacked a time-bound programme for total disarmament.

On the other hand, Japan is enjoying American nuclear protection under a bilateral military pact which ensures constant American military presence in Japan in the form of troops and bases.

## DPRK ends 3 yrs mourning for Kim Il Sung

TOKYO, July 8: North Korea ended a period of official mourning Tuesday on the third anniversary of the death of its founding father Kim Il Sung, media reported Tuesday, says AP.

Kim Jong Il, the elder Kim's son and designated successor, attended the ceremony under his current title as head of the country's military, according to the reports, which were monitored in Tokyo by the Radio-press news agency.

The younger Kim has ruled North Korea as supreme military commander since his father died on July 8, 1994 at age 82, but he has not assumed his father's titles of president and party chief.

Since Kim Il Sung's death there has been intense speculation on when the younger Kim, who is 55, would assume his father's titles.

Some analysts have said the delay points to an unsettled political situation in the isolated country and means that he is having difficulty in gaining the full support he needs.

## Thailand asked to evacuate foreign nationals Factional clash breaks out in northern Cambodian town

PHNOM PENH, July 8: Factional fighting broke out in the northern Cambodian province of Siem Reap today, forcing the cancellation of a planned overland evacuation of foreigners from the provincial capital, aid and relief agency officials said, reports AFP.

The fighting, northwest of Siem Reap town — home of the famed 12th-century Angkor Wat Temple Complex — was centered in Angkor Chum district and involved at least 100 soldiers on each side, they said.

"The evacuation has been cancelled. We are hoping to be able to get people out on a flight to Phnom Penh," said a senior aid agency official with constant radio contact with Siem Reap about 314 kilometres north of Phnom Penh.

It was not immediately clear if the fighting involved troops loyal to first Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh

who moved to the outskirts of Siem Reap town on Monday. At least 300 soldiers affiliated with the prince's royalist Funcinpec Party were camped near the Siem Reap late Monday and had refused orders to leave raising tension and prompting the organisation of the evacuation.

The troops had arrived from their base at Samrong 80 kilometres (50 miles) northwest. Siem Reap has been virtually unreachable by telephone since fierce factional fighting broke out in Phnom Penh over the weekend.

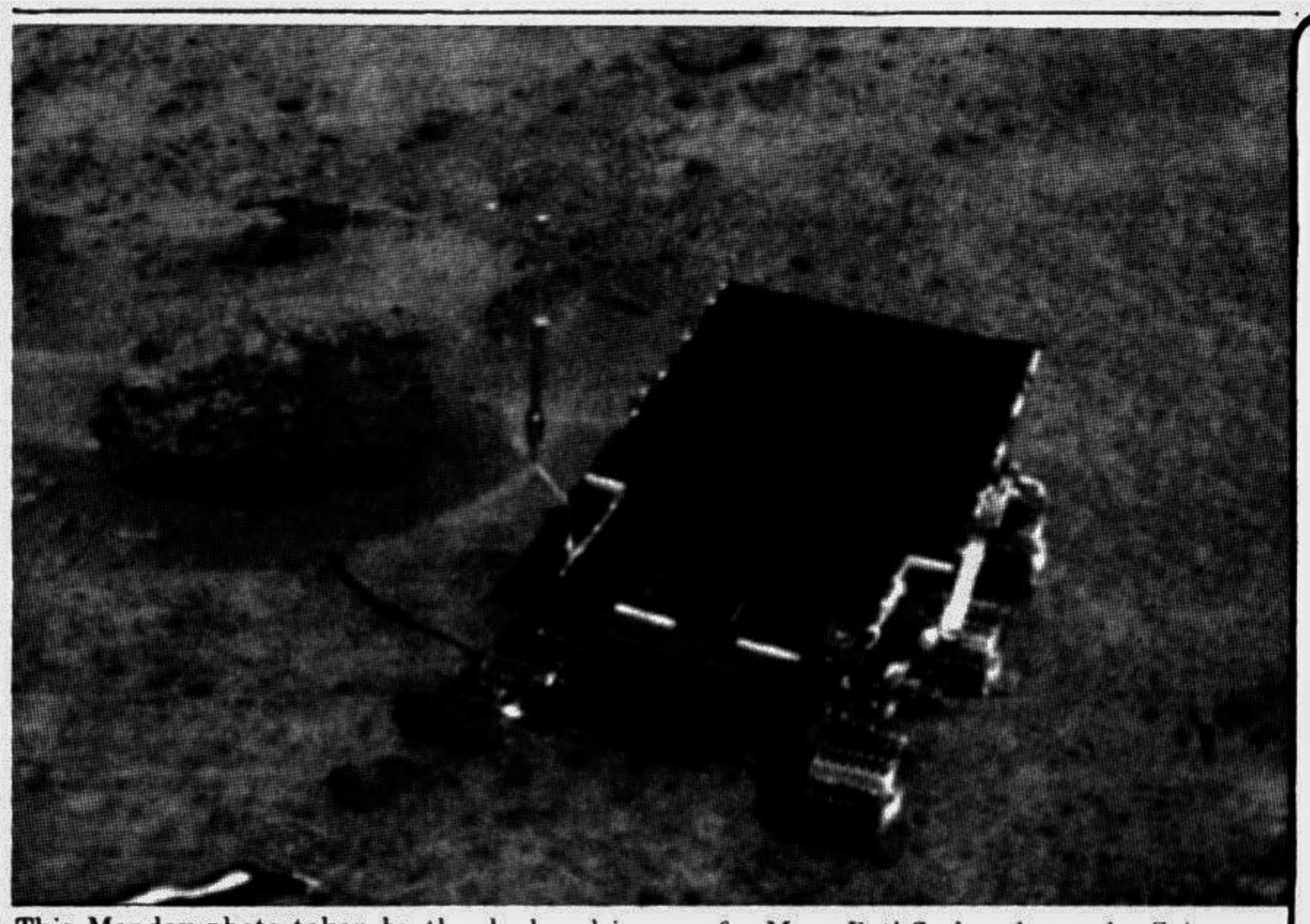
Soldiers loyal to Second Prime Minister Hun Sen's former communist Cambodian People's Party (CPP) took full control of the capital on Monday after two days of fierce factional fighting that left at least 15 dead and 82 wounded. Prince Ranariddh's supporters have vowed to resist what

they have termed a "coup d'etat" and several top Funcinpec security officials are believed to have fled to the north and northwest to re-group and retaliate.

The northwest provinces of Banteay Meanchey and Battambang were reported quite early today after clashes Monday in and around Battambang town as well as on its border with Banteay Meanchey, officials said.

Meanwhile, four countries, including the United States, have asked Thailand for possible assistance in evacuating their nationals from strife-torn Cambodia, diplomats said today.

The Thai Ambassador to Cambodia, Dornedj Bunnag, said the United States, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Pakistan had approached Thailand about the possibility of using Thai military planes to take their citizens out.



This Monday photo taken by the deployed imager for Mars Pathfinder shows the Sojourner rover near the rock dubbed "Barnacle Bill." The rover has moved into position to facilitate using the Alpha X-Ray Spectrometre so that it can analyse the rocks make up. — AFP/UNB photo

## Egypt accuses Israel of trying to destroy ME peace

CAIRO, July 8: Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Mussa on Monday accused Israel of trying to destroy the peace process by refusing to respect signed accords with the Palestinians, reports AFP.

"There are attempts to murder the peace process, but Egypt is resisting them and is making efforts to save this process," Mussa told reporters.

"Those assassination attempts include the non-respect for the terms of reference of the peace process and the signed accords as well as obstacles preventing a just fair peace with regard to Palestine, Syria or Lebanon," he added.

Egypt has been mediating in a bid to revive Israeli-Palestinian peace talks which have been deadlocked since the Jewish

state started construction in mid-March on a controversial settlement for Jews in Arab east Jerusalem.

The Egyptian press on Monday launched a violent attack on Israel over a series of incidents defaming religious figures and accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of seeking "Peace of cows and pigs."

"One of the stupidest of Netanyahu's many acts of idiocy is his decision not to resume peace negotiations until the Palestinians cease their violence," wrote Said Sonbol, editorialist with government newspaper Al Akhbar.

"What peace is Netanyahu speaking of the peace of cows or the peace of pigs," Sonbol said, in an allusion to posters plastered by Jewish extremists in

the West Bank town of Hebron depicting the Muslim prophet as a pig and a magazine photo-montage of the Virgin Mary with a cow.

"There is no hope of peace while this man keeps his post," Sonbol said. Describing the Palestinian uprising in Hebron as a reaction to "Vile acts by certain fanatical Jews."

Government newspaper Al Gomhurya called for strong and urgent coordination among Arab countries to respond to Israel's policies "Pushing the region into a dark tunnel and an uncertain future."

Al Ahram warned that the current situation could "ignite violence and sabotage the efforts to people working sincerely for peace."

## For joining breakaway faction Gujral under pressure to sack 3 ministers

NEW DELHI, July 8: Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral came under pressure today to sack three ministers of his minority coalition government who have joined a breakaway faction of his party, reports AFP.

The Communist Party of India (CPI), which forms part of the ruling coalition, said it had told Gujral to sack the three.

The minister quit Gujral's Janata Dal (people's party) at the weekend when Laloo Prasad Yadav, the former president of the party, launched his own breakaway group after weeks of bitter in-fighting.

The Janata Dal is the dominant party in the United Front coalition, although the split does not pose an immediate threat to the government, it has damaged Gujral's authority as prime minister. Yadav has said he would like

his new party to remain within the United Front coalition.

But CPI spokesman Doraiswamy Raja said since Yadav's new group was not an official member of Gujral's centre-left front, the three rebel ministers had no right to continue in the government.

"We told the prime minister he must inquire from the three ministers where they stand after the split," Raja said.

"Unless they take a firm stand against Yadav, they cannot be allowed to remain in the government."

CPI General Secretary A B Bardhan added: "The position of these three ministers has become absolutely untenable."

There was no immediate response from Gujral, who became the prime minister in April with the help of Yadav after a previous United Front minority government was toppled.

## Off the Record

### Caves in ancient war-strategy

SUZHOU: More than 100 caves used for military purposes, which are 2,500 years old, have been discovered in Zhanjiang City in east China's Jiangsu province, reports Xinhua.

Archaeologists say that they could date back to the spring and autumn period (770-476 BC) and the warring states period (475-221 BC). The caves were used as beacon stations to convey military information. They were discovered on a small hill, which played an important role in ancient military history.

According to the archaeologists, the caves are eight to 15 metres deep, and are surrounded by stone walls outside. Many historical relics such as pottery were unearthed in them.

### Tusker's house-to-house raid for liquor

JAMSHEDPUR: An elephant, strangely addicted to country liquor, is on a house-to-house search and chasing away manufacturers of the brew at villages in east Singhbhum district, reports PTL.

The residents of the villages, in the Chakulia block of the district, recently complained before the district headquarters here that the elephant was in the habit of raiding houses, drawn by the smell of liquor in the manufacture, and destroying them before consuming it.

The villagers, who have nicknamed the Tusker as "excise commissioner" appealed for help to capture the pachyderm lest their liquor business would be destroyed.

## 21 die in Chinese floods

BEIJING, July 8: Serious flooding in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong has claimed 21 lives, and direct economic losses from the storms are estimated 1.41 billion yuan (168 million dollars), local officials said today, reports AFP.

Altogether, 2.3 million people have been affected by the worst floods to hit the country's most prosperous province in 20 years, said Yang Enrong, Vice Secretary General of the Guangdong Red Cross.

Worst hit was Qingyuan, some 80 kilometres (50 miles) north of the provincial capital Guangzhou, where at least eight people have died.

That toll is likely to climb after nine people were reported missing when a bus was swept away by rushing floodwaters on Monday.

Other cities affected by torrential rainstorms in Guangdong over the weekend included the special economic zone of Zhuhai, as well as Maoming, Zhongshan and Meizhou.

In Moaming, in southwestern Guangdong, five people were reported missing when a bridge collapsed.

Altogether, 252 towns and 5,100 villages in the province have been damaged by the floodwaters, Syang said, adding that 4,780 houses had collapsed and 20,000 were seriously damaged.

Swollen waters on the Beiji river resulted in 227 bridges collapsing.

According to yang, most of the economic losses were the result of lost production from nearly 200 factories that have been forced to close down because of the floods.

## US retd general believes Iran engineered destruction of Pan Am Flight 103

NEW YORK, July 8: A report that Iran engineered the 1988 destruction of Pan Am Flight 103 in retaliation for the shootdown of an Iranian jetliner would support the view long held by the man who then commanded US forces in the Persian Gulf, reports AP.

"I have always believed Iran was behind it and I still do," said retired Marine Gen. George Crist, who as head of US Central Command was responsible for American military activities in the Gulf.

"The theory has always been out there, and I don't know that anyone has ever proved any other theory," Crist said in a telephone interview. "My personal opinion is that Iran did it in retaliation for the loss of its Airbus."

Iran has dismissed as "unfounded and ridiculous" a report Saturday by Germany's Der Spiegel magazine that German officials were looking into information that the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini ordered the bombing of the Pan Am jet over Lockerbie, Scotland. The report said the order came after the US warship Vincennes shot down an Iranian passenger jet, killing 290 people.

The information came from Abolghassem Mesbahi, a co-founder of the Iranian intelligence agency who later went into exile.

Crist, a four-star general who retired in 1989 and now lives in St. Petersburg, Florida, had ordered the Vincennes to the Gulf in May 1988.

## Space dominates starry-eyed Americans' popular culture

LOS ANGELES, July 8: America is in the middle of a space invasion, reports AP.

In the news: The Pathfinder landing on Mars, trouble on the Mir space station, the space shuttle orbiting Earth, the suicides linked to the Hale-Bopp comet.

In the movie theaters: "Men in Black," the Fourth of July's top film, and "Contact" about to debut.

On television: "The X-Files" and "Third Rock from the Sun." From Madison Avenue: Space-or alien-themed ads from Kodak, Oates, Quisp cereal, Volkswagen and Breathe Right nasal strips.

And from left field: UFO believers flocking to Roswell, New Mexico. What on Earth — or Mars or Jupiter or Pluto — is going on here?

"Earth as a planet is suffering from the view the grass is greener on the other side of the

intergalactic fence," said Ed Solomon, the "Men in Black" screenwriter. "I think people are looking above and beyond for things to find hope in — and be mad at."

John Hodge, director of the Santa Monica College Planetarium, said space has a particular appeal to restless Americans, who had to start looking to the heavens after the push West hit the Pacific Ocean.

"The public is really interested in exploration and the idea of a frontier, maybe because frontiers are a part of American culture," he said.

"America was developed with a frontier mentality, where people were continually challenged by new problems that had to be faced in new ways."

All of a sudden, be it earthly dissatisfaction, a deep-seated American consciousness or just chance, space-related phenom-

ena are arranging themselves in popular culture like aligned planets.

"I think the time is right," said Janos Jeszenszky, a sales representative for Celestron International, a telescope manufacturer.

While "Men in Black" — a movie about a special government team that hunts down slimy aliens on Earth — was reaping 51.1 million dlrs in its weekend debut, Pathfinder had NASA basking in its best publicity since the early days of the space shuttle programme.

Meantime, the Mir space station was getting a much different kind of attention as it limped along after a collision with a cargo ship, Mir got new supplies Monday in a docking mission that went off without a hitch.

Also in orbit is the crew of the shuttle Columbia. The mission has been overshadowed by Mars-mania but is still getting

attention as a space sidebar to newscasts dominated by news from the final frontier.

All of this far-off interest got off on a macabre note in March with the story of the suicides of cultists who thought they would fly off on a spaceship in the Hale-Bopp comet's wake. The mass deaths put a grim spin on the already big story of the comet, which could be seen from many Americans' front yards.

"There was a lot of interest generated due to the cult suicide," said Peter Hubert, owner of Peter and Sons in Redondo Beach, which sells telescopes and photographs of space.

"They all wanted to know if I had pictures of the space ship following Hale-Bopp."

There was no such ship to be seen, or so astronomers say. Just like the government claims there was no UFO crash near Roswell in 1947.

In Roswell, in fact, the opposite view has become a cottage industry. On the same weekend the Earth invaded Mars, thousands of UFO believers descended on New Mexico for a six-day commemoration of the so-called Roswell Incident.

The tantalising possibility of life on other planets was a driving force behind the Roswell fascination, just as it has been with the interest in the Pathfinder mission. Millions have followed the Mars landing on the Internet.

Hollywood is hoping this translates into box office interest. On Friday, moviegoers will be able to check out "Contact," the story of an astronomer who has dedicated himself to making contact with life in space.

"Men in Black" and "Contact" are, of course, the latest in a long series of films about space.

On the small screen, TV has been just as intrigued by the dramatic and comedic potential

of space, in everything from "My Favourite Martian" to "Ali."

The latest successes include the often-dark "X-Files" (soon to be a feature film) and the comedy "Third Rock from the Sun."

Advertisers have also caught the space bug, with a number of products being hawked with the assistance of pitch-aliens and flying saucers.

CNS Inc of Bloomington, Minnesota, which makes those Breathe Right nasal strips that football players like to wear, produced commercials with UFO-ologists erroneously opining the strip was so effective the technology must have come from a UFO crash site.

Coincidence or conspiracy? "I don't know that anybody gave any thought to the fact that we had a UFO theme," said Richard Jahnke, president of CNS. "We just wanted to catch people's attention."



US President Bill Clinton gestures to Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar, during a press conference at the Moncloa Palace, the Premier's official residence, in Madrid, Monday. President Clinton is in Madrid to attend the NATO Summit. — AP/UNB photo

## Leaders scramble to salvage peace as unrest grips N Ireland

BELFAST, July 8: Northern Ireland braced Monday for a week of unrest as political leaders scrambled to salvage peace from the wreckage of riots and recriminations that followed a controversial weekend Protestant parade, reports AFP.

The province woke up Monday after 48 hours of violence that left 80 people injured, 46 of them police officers, 220 vehicles wrecked and 41 people under arrest.

Apart from the physical destruction, which police admit was not as bad as they had feared, was the damage done to the peace process with no sign of a compromise between the province's bitterly divided communities.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair pledged to continue pressing for peace, while Northern Ireland Secretary Mo Mowlam asked to meet representatives of both sides, but nationalist leaders said they felt betrayed.

And with the climax of the Protestant marching season looming large at the end of this week with the traditional province wide July 12 parades, there were fears of more unrest to come.

The unrest overnight was sparked by a decision to let a Protestant Orange Order march Sunday past a Roman Catholic neighbourhood of Drumcree on the outskirts of Portadown, west of Belfast.