

# BRIEFLY



**Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat (R) shakes hands with Israeli Public Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani during a meeting at Arafat's office in the West Bank town of Ramallah Friday. Arafat announced Friday that his deputy, Mahmud Abbas, would hold a series of talks with Kahalani starting next week, and that the two sides would discuss "all issues" on the peace talks table.** — AP/UNB photo

**2 journalists freed in Nigeria:** Two journalists returned home Friday after being released from jail by the country's new military leader who has pledged to bring freedom and democracy to Africa's most populous country, AP says from Lagos.

**Babafemi Ojodu, editor of Lagos Tempo, rejoined his family in the commercial capital days after military ruler Gen. Abdulsalam Abubakar promised to free all political detainees. George Mbah, a journalist for the weekly Tell magazine who was jailed in connection with an alleged 1995 coup plot against the late military ruler Gen. Sani Abacha, arrived home in Lagos on Friday.**

**Rebels kill 15 in Niger:** Rebels killed 15 villagers and injured six in an attack Friday in the Niuguim region 1,200-km east of Niamey, state broadcasting media reported, AFP says from Niamey, Niger.

**The attack, which was not immediately claimed, was blamed on the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) operating for the past four years in the extreme southeast of the country on the borders with Nigeria and Chad.**

**Thai cops hurt by landmine:** Two policemen on a joint training exercise with the military near the Cambodian border were critically injured when they stepped on a landmine, the Bangkok Post reported yesterday, AP says from Bangkok.

**The officers stepped on the mine Friday in northeastern Surin province about 5-km from the border.**

**8 die in Vietnam landslides:** A pair of landslides two hours apart killed eight people and injured six others in northern Vietnam, a local government official said yesterday, AP reports from Hanoi.

**The first slide, at 7 am Friday, buried houses of three families from the Hmong ethnic minority, said an official from the Sapa district People's Committee in Lao Cai province. Six people were killed and two injured. Two hours later at the same place, two local tourists were killed by another landslide and four others were injured as they tried to get around the scene, the officials said.**

**Croat war criminal's wife held:** The wife of a Croatian who led a Mazi-era concentration camp was arrested Friday following an extradition request from Yugoslavia, AP says from Buenos Aires.

**Nada Sakic, 76, wife of former Jasenovac concentration camp commandant Dinko Sakic, was taken before a federal judge for extradition hearings Friday morning, said Eduardo Musto, an Interpol spokesman in Buenos Aires. The judge ruled Sakic is to remain under house arrest. Known here by her Spanish given name Esperanza, Nada Sakic is believed to have run, a female block at Jasenovac when she was only 16.**

**3 die in Lebanese bomb blast:** Three men believed to be Hezbollah guerrillas were killed in southern Lebanon, apparently while preparing a bomb, security officials said yesterday, AP reports from Lebanon.

**They said the men were killed Friday night in a deserted house in the village of Arnoun on the edge of the Israeli-occupied border enclave in southern Lebanon.**

**Authorities deny arming Serb civilians in Kosovo**

**PRISTINA, Yugoslavia, July 25:** Serbian authorities denied Friday distributing arms among the Serbian civilian minority in the province of Kosovo, where the ethnic Albanian majority representing nine-tenths of the population is seeking independence, reports AFP.

**The Kosovo Democratic League, the main Albanian party in Kosovo, had claimed earlier that the Serbian authorities, representing their main government in the Yugoslav federal capital Belgrade, has distributed arms in the Kosovo capital Pristina.**

**An official Serbian source told AFP, "It's false, where are the proofs? There have been no incidents at Pristina."**

**However, the source admitted that due to lack of personnel arms may have been distributed to reserve police officers in villages with a Serbian majority such as those in Klinja area.**

**"If these people had not been armed, their villages would to-**

## 8 of a family massacred in Pakistan

**ISLAMABAD, July 25:** Eight people were massacred in central Pakistan's Okara district over a matrimonial dispute, police said today, reports AFP.

**Two men on horse-back armed with automatic weapons on Friday attacked the house of a man who had allegedly abducted the fiancée of one of the assailants, police said.**

**The alleged kidnapper identified as Hafizullah, an arms dealer, was not in the house and the attackers, who were brothers, opened fire killing all members of his family.**

**The brothers then rode to a nearby village and raided Hafizullah's shop, but were arrested when police besieged the bazaar.**

## Bodo rebels kill 7 in Assam

**NEW DELHI, July 25:** Tribal militants killed seven people and injured 23 other in an overnight attack in the eastern Indian state of Assam, the United News of India said today, reports AFP.

**It said Bodo separatist guerrillas swooped down on a village in Assam's Kokrajhar district and shot dead seven members of a rival tribal group on Friday night — 23 others, including women and children were injured.**

**The attack came a week after eight Indian policemen were killed by the Bodos, who are struggling for an independent tribal homeland in oil-rich Assam.**

## 4 shot dead in Kashmir

**JAMMU, July 25:** Unidentified gunmen broke into a home in the northern Kashmir state early Saturday morning and shot dead four members of a family suspected to have links with separatist militants, police said, reports AP.

**Three of the victims were women. Another family member is reported missing after the attack and could have been kidnapped, police said.**

**The killings took place in Doda, the same area where 25 Hindus were shot dead by Islamic militants last month. Doda is 170-km north west of Kashmir's summer capital Jammu.**

## US Navy to launch new N-powered aircraft carrier

**NORFOLK, Virginia, July 25:** The US Navy is launching its newest nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, the 4.5 billion dollar ship Harry S Truman, with festivities that will draw President Bill Clinton and a host of Democrats, reports AP.

**Some prominent Republicans were passing on Saturday's ceremony, saying prior commitments demanded their time.**

**At Norfolk Naval base, however, the concern was not with no-shows but with accommodating an expected crowd of 20,000 to see the hulking, 97,000-ton ship join the Atlantic Fleet. The 329-metre ship has already been at sea for trials.**

## A Kosovo Liberation Army female soldier dismantles AK-47 machine-gun during military exercise near the town of Suva Reka. On Friday, Ibrahim Rugova, the top ethnic Albanian politician, demanded international action to stop fighting in Kosovo.



**A Kosovo Liberation Army female soldier dismantles AK-47 machine-gun during military exercise near the town of Suva Reka. On Friday, Ibrahim Rugova, the top ethnic Albanian politician, demanded international action to stop fighting in Kosovo.** — AP/UNB Photo

## Bosnian Serbs accused of protecting war criminals

**THE HAGUE, July 25:** The chief prosecutor at the UN War Crimes Tribunal Louise Arbour on Friday accused the Bosnian Serbs of protecting suspected war criminals by giving them false papers thus increasing the chances of arresting the wrong men, reports AFP.

**Her comments came after the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague was forced into an embarrassing climbdown when it announced that NATO-led Stabilisation Force (SFOR) troops seeking two Bosnian Serb twin brothers had arrested the wrong men.**

**Arbour put the blame firmly at the door of Republika Srpska, the Serb held part of Bosnia-Herzegovina for failing to arrest wanted suspects on their territory and actively furnishing them with false papers so they could evade arrest.**

# Gunman bursts into US Capitol building: 2 policemen killed

**WASHINGTON, July 25:** As the US Capitol's flags fly at half-staff in mourning, investigators are trying to learn how and why a gunman burst into the national landmark and killed two police officers before being shot and captured, reports AP.

**The suspect, identified as Russell E Weston Jr, 41, of rural Rimini, Montana, was being held under heavy guard at a hospital after surgery for gunshot wounds, and charges were pending.**

**He had been investigated by the secret Service two years ago "as a sort of a low-level threat" to President Bill Clinton, said a federal law enforcement official who spoke on condition of anonymity.**

**About 17 hours after the brief but lethal gunfight in the tourist-packed building that also wounded a tourist, the Capitol was due to be reopened Saturday, a tribute to its tradition as a symbol of freedom and democracy.**

**"This is a terrible incident that's transpired here at the nation's Capitol," said Sen Dan**

**Nichols, spokesman for the Capitol police. "But we don't want that to dissuade anyone from coming to the nation's Capitol and experiencing this great building and having access to their government."**

**Killed were Jacob Chestnut, 58, and John Gibson, 42, both 18-year veterans of the Capitol police force. Each was married with three children and colleagues said Chestnut, an Air Force veteran, was planning to retire soon.**

**The wounded tourist was identified as Angela Dickinson, 24, who was reported in serious condition at George Washington University Hospital with facial and shoulder injuries. Authorities withheld her hometown.**

**The shootings occurred at 3:40 pm Friday with the House still meeting and the Senate having just recessed for the week. They were the Capitol's first since 1954, when four Puerto Rican nationalists in the visitors' gallery of the House opened fire on lawmakers. A bomb exploded outside the Senate one night in 1983, leading authorities to tighten secu-**

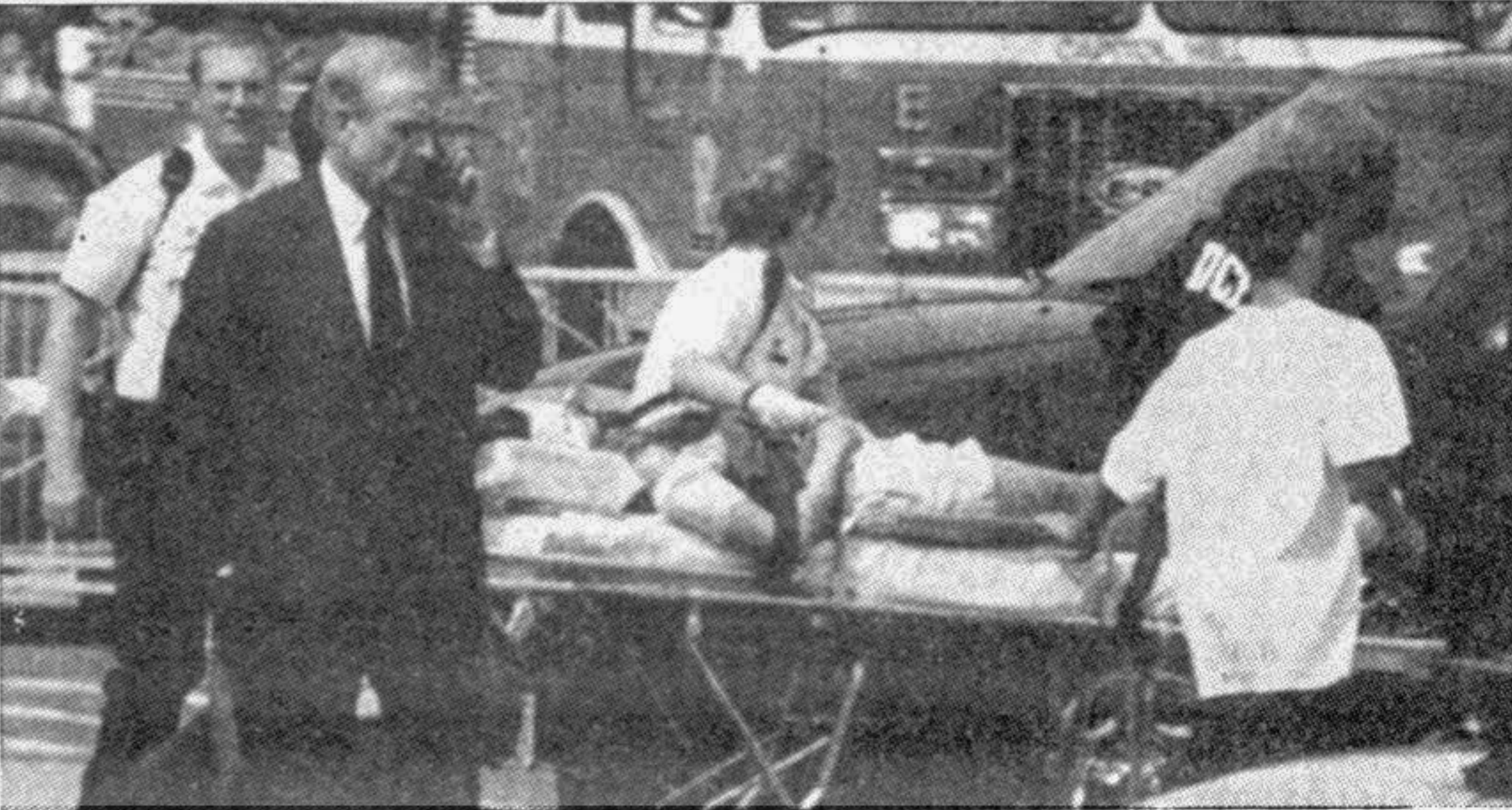
**urity the first of several times over the last 15 years.**

**Hours after the incident, investigators were seen shining flashlights on the floor of the vestibule where the shooting began, just inside an entrance on the Capitol's east side. Small, square white markers were scattered over the floor, apparently marking where shell casings had fallen.**

**A security camera was operating in the vicinity of the shooting and presumably captured the episode on tape, said two officials speaking on condition of anonymity.**

**Many questions remained, such as the suspect's motivation, which officers shot him and how the tourist was injured, Nichols said Capitol officers decide whether to wear bulletproof vests but did not make clear whether Chestnut and Gibson were wearing any.**

**Lawmakers and Capitol officials insisted that despite the casualties, the incident underlined a security system that managed to keep any of the hundreds of legislators and aides in the building from being**



**An unidentified victim is rushed to a helicopter on Capitol Hill in Washington Friday. Two policemen, a female tourist and a suspected gunman were wounded late Friday afternoon in an exchange of gunfire inside the Capitol at the office of Rep Tom Delay, officials said.** — AP/UNB photo

# Obuchi distributes key posts among major party factions

**TOKYO, July 25:** Japan's premier-in-waiting gave key leadership posts to prominent figures in three major ruling party factions Saturday, in an apparent attempt to heal rifts caused by a bruising internal struggle to find a new leader, reports AP.

**Foreign Minister Keizo Obuchi, who was elected president of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party on Friday, named veteran policy maker Yoshio Mori as the party's new Secretary General — the LDP's second most powerful executive post after party president.**

**Mori belongs to the faction**

**that had "backed" maverick Health Minister Junichiro Koizumi in the turbulent LDP race to find a replacement for outgoing Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto. The contest split the party, pitting a raucous band of young reformists against party elders who supported Obuchi.**

**Obuchi also appointed former Post and Telecommunications Minister Takashi Fukuyama as chairman of the party's General Council and former Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda as chairman of the Policy Research Council.**

**The LDP's old guard power-**

**brokers scored a major victory with the elections of their favourite as the party's new president, but it is now up to Obuchi to unite the party and prevent disgruntled legislators from bolting.**

**Obuchi is expected to come under tremendous pressure in coming weeks to take actions to encourage growth in the world's second largest economy and restore trust in a ruling party.**

**One of Obuchi's first tasks will be to find coalition partners so the LDP can pass legislation in the upper house of Parliament, where it holds a minority of seats.**

# Cambodia goes to polls today

**PHNOM PENH, July 25:** Conceding that a campaign laden with violence and fear won't enable fully free and fair elections, foreign countries and independent watchdog groups conceded Saturday that they will judge Cambodia's polls by a lower standard, reports AP.

**Cambodian election officials meanwhile said that they would bar two groups with close links to strongman Hun Sen from deploying an estimated 40,000 observers at polling stations, which many feared would influence the result.**

**Campaigning for the parliamentary elections ended Friday, followed by a one-day cooling off period before the 5.4 million registered voters can cast ballots Sunday for the first time since the United Nations organised polls in 1993 under the protection of 20,000 peacekeepers.**

**This time, Cambodia is organising the polls and the UN has been invited only to coordinate 678 foreign observers from 40 countries and regional groupings. They will be unable**

**to monitor all the 11,600 polling stations.**

**The vote had been called by strongman Hun Sen, who is seeking to restore international legitimacy and aid after deposing his co-premier, Prince Norodom Ranariddh, in a bloody coup last year that shattered the coalition established after the UN-sponsored balloting.**

**Ranariddh and former finance minister Sam Rainsy are the main challengers. They believe Hun Sen will rig the vote or the counting in favour of his Cambodian People's Party. Many Cambodians fear Hun Sen will call out the army to retain power.**

**The Sam Rainsy Party claimed that violence continued Saturday, saying a grenade was thrown at the home of a local party leader in the southern province of Koh Kong. He was uninjured.**

**The opposition, watchdog groups and some countries have accused Hun Sen of intimidating voters and of killing, kidnapping and beating their polit-**

**ical opponents.**

**They have pushed the international community to refuse to endorse the election unless it is free and fair, but the UN coordinating body, which will have a decisive voice, decided Friday that a more vague standard of "broadly representative" would be acceptable.**

**Others fell in line Saturday. An internationally recognised local watchdog, the Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (COMFREL), which will be an important observer of the balloting, said that if things go smoothly for voting and ballot counting, the elections could be deemed "reasonably credible."**

**The UN group — officially known as the Joint International Observers Group — said it should be able to certify the election as "broadly representative of the will of the Cambodian people."**

**The group indicated that it would not hold Cambodia to as rigorous standards as more developed democracies.**

# Sudanese govt, rebel teams hold talks in Italy

**ROME, July 25:** Representatives of the Sudanese government and of a rebel force met in Italy Friday in their first face-to-face meeting in four years, an Italian official was quoted as saying, reports AP.

**Italy's Ambassador to Sudan, Claudio Pacifico, told the ANSA news agency that the two sides met in Umbria, in central Italy, during a conference. Previously the two sides had met in Nairobi indirectly, using mediators.**

**No specifics of the meeting were disclosed.**

**The Sudan People's Liberation Army has been fighting since 1983 for more autonomy for the predominantly Christian and animist south from the Islamic north.**

**The Sudanese government is blaming the rebels for deaths from hunger in the south.**

**A Cabinet official on Thursday said as many as 50 people are dying everyday of hunger in southern Sudan and accused the rebels of seizing food supplies delivered to the south by international aid organisations.**

**International aid workers have said that some of the shipments have been burned by government-allied militias.**

# Fernandes softens tone on Sino-Indian ties

**PAHALGAM, Kashmir, July 25:** Defence Minister George Fernandes yesterday softened his stand on China saying there was a need for normalising relations with the communist country, reports PTI.

**"We should make all possible efforts to stabilise relations with China," he told reporters after paying obeisance at the holy cave shrine of Amarnath.**

**Fernandes said India and China were the world's two most populous nations and neighbours. "They are destined to remain friends," he said, adding "My conviction is that we move in that direction."**

**Seeking better cooperation in various fields, he said discussions on outstanding issues, including border dispute, between the two countries would continue and would be resolved**

**through dialogue.**

**Elaborating on the border dispute between New Delhi and Beijing, the defence minister said it includes the portion of Kashmir (Akshay Chin) illegally handed over by Pakistan to China.**

**Joint groups, comprising defence and external affairs ministers of the two countries, were meeting at regular intervals to iron out their differences, he said.**

**The defence minister said India had good relations with China but that country was upset over India's Pokharan tests.**

**When asked whether New Delhi had made its position clear to Beijing in this regard, the minister said, "we had made our position clear to the world that we are a nuclear state."**

# UN, Taliban negotiating return of aid groups

**UNITED NATIONS, July 25:** The United Nations is trying to negotiate the return of international aid organisations to the Afghan capital and was to meet with the Taliban in Pakistan on Saturday, UN and Taliban officials said, reports AP.

**No immediate breakthroughs were expected from the meeting where UN officials will relay concerns about the expulsion and the humanitarian situation in the country to the Taliban representative in Islamabad.**

**Bronek Szymanski, the World Food Programme's regional director, was to urge the Taliban representative, Abdul Hakeem**

**Mujahid, to readmit the groups, UN officials said Friday.**

**The Taliban representative in New York, Nourullah Zardran, expressed the religious militia's eagerness to resume talks during a meeting Friday with the UN humanitarian coordinator, Sergio Vieira de Mello.**

**During the meeting, de Mello urged the Taliban to readmit the aid groups and stressed the international community's concern about the impact of the lost assistance, UN officials said.**

**"Their presence in Kabul is vital," de Mello said in an interview after the meeting.**

# Suu Kyi prevented from travelling outside Yangon

**BANGKOK, July 25:** Myanmar's military and Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi were engaged in a standoff on a highway Saturday morning, nearly 24 hours after police stopped the democracy campaigner's car as she tried to travel outside Yangon, reports AP.

**Suu Kyi, an aide and two drivers spent the night inside her white sedan surrounded by barbed wire barricades, sand bags and a contingent of soldiers about 51-km west of the capital.**

**This is the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize winner's third attempt this month to travel outside Yangon to meet members of her political party, the National League for Democracy. The military government has stopped her every time. It denies she is under house arrest or other unlawful restrictions.**

**The military issued a statement Saturday that said Suu Kyi was "bullheaded" and**

**lacked a "humanitarian vision." It accused her of conspiring to "portray Myanmar as a lawless and unstable country where the democratic forces are being suppressed."**

**Suu Kyi's intention this time was to travel to Bassein, 160-km west of Yangon, in the Irrawaddy delta where local authorities are more repressive than in some other parts of Myanmar. She was stopped near Anyarsu village at about 10:15 am Friday by local police who called the military authorities.**

**Her goal, as in previous journeys, was to meet with members of her party voted into parliament in a 1990 election the military refused to honour despite pledging before the poll it would hand over power to the wingers.**

**She also hoped to give encouragement to families of party members who have been jailed by the military government.**

# Nicosia blasts Demirel's comment on N Cyprus

**NICOSIA, Cyprus, July 25:** Cyprus on Friday denounced a statement by Turkey's president that the occupied north of the island would be regarded economically as a province of Turkey, reports AP.

**Government spokesman Christos Stylianides called on the world to take steps to prevent such a development.**

**"The statement by (Turkish President Suleyman) Demirel is one more proof of Turkish intentions. The international community must cease its coddling of Turkey and its toleration of Turkish actions against Cyprus," Stylianides said.**

**Thursday in Ankara, Demirel said the economies of Turkey and the breakaway Turkish Cypriot state were heading toward integration.**

**Demirel is due to visit northern Cyprus on Saturday to take part in weeklong celebrations marking the anniversary of the 1974 Turkish invasion.**

**Cyprus has been split into a Greek Cypriot-controlled south**

**and a Turkish-occupied north since Turkey invaded in 1974 in the wake of a coup by supporters of union with Greece. The breakaway state is recognized only by Ankara, which maintains 35,000 troops there.**

**Turkish Cypriots are already part of the Turkish economy. They use the Turkish lira and have to accept Turkey's 77 per cent inflation. Their lack of recognition impedes their ability to trade with countries other than Turkey.**

**The Cypriot protest came as the US State Department coordinator for Cyprus, Thomas Miller, conferred separately Friday with Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders without achieving a breakthrough in efforts to resume inter-communal peace talks.**

**He said his discussions explored ways to resume the UN-sponsored peace talks and to lower tension caused by the Cypriot government's planned deployment of Russian S-3000 anti-aircraft missiles.**

# Indonesian military accused of torturing pro-democracy activists

**WASHINGTON, July 25:** There are indications high Indonesian military officials were involved in kidnapping and torturing pro-democracy activists, including those who remain missing, US officials told lawmakers Friday, reports AP.

**So far, 11 members of an elite Indonesian army division have been arrested on such charges as part of the investigation ordered by President B J Habibie, said John Shattuck, assistant secretary of state for human rights.**

**"We are obviously watching very closely to see everyone who is arrested and formally charged in these proceedings," Shattuck told a House International Relations subcommittee. "We expect further arrests to occur."**

**Franklin Kramer, assistant secretary of defence for international security, said the US doesn't know the identities of the 11 suspects or**

**whether they were trained by US Special Forces.**

**Asked whether top Indonesian military officials might have been involved in the kidnapping and torture of activists in the weeks before President Suharto resigned in May, Kramer said it was possible.**

**"So far as I'm aware we're not certain who they are nor how high up it goes," Kramer told lawmakers. "I have some indications that it may go up high, but I don't know."**

**He said the indications were based on US intelligence information.**

**The Indonesian government announced the arrests over the past two weeks. Human rights group say at least a dozen activists remain missing. The military has said the accused overstepped orders to monitor protesters.**

**Some members of the armed forces are accused of organising groups to incite the May riots in which ethnic Chinese were often targeted, Habibie or-**

**dered a military investigation into those charges in June.**

**Rep. Christopher Smith, chairman of the subcommittee, is among lawmakers who object to US military joint training with foreign forces US-trained units, particularly in Colombia, have been accused of human rights abuses.**

**"Our joint exercises and training of military units that have been charged over and over again with the gravest kinds of crimes against humanity, including torture and murder, cry out for explanation," Smith said.**

**Despite their criticism of the Indonesian military, Shattuck and Kramer praised recent restraint in quelling unrest by a population facing severe poverty and hunger caused by deep economic problems.**

**In a sign of progress, the Indonesian government announced Friday that it would withdraw some of the 12,000 soldiers deployed in east Timor.**



**Visitors to the "Titanic Exhibition in Japan" at a Tokyo department store Friday examine a window frame and other materials which were raised from the sunken cruise ship that has been lying on the seabed of the Atlantic Ocean, off Newfoundland, since 1912. Most of the nearly 200 items displayed here until Aug 24 are being shown in public for the first time in the world.** — AP photo