

International

Butler cuts short trip to Baghdad

# Talks on dismantling mass destruction weapons fail

## BRIEFLY

**ROK president fires FM:** President Kim Dae-jung fired his foreign minister Tuesday, holding him responsible for what critics say was a humiliating deal with Russia to end a diplomatic row. AP reports from Seoul.

The president named Hong Soon-yong, 61, a former ambassador to Germany and Russia, to replace Park Chung-soo as minister of foreign affairs and trade.

At a meeting of foreign ministers in Manila last week, Russia and South Korea said they had settled a diplomatic row that began when each expelled spies posing as diplomats. The two foreign ministers, however, differed widely on terms of the settlement.

**Lightning kills 10 in West Bengal:** Ten persons were killed and 14 others injured when lightning struck them at a village in Bankura district Monday evening, police sources said yesterday. PTI reports from Bankura, West Bengal.

The persons were struck by lightning at Iswarda village under Salora police station when they were returning from Piharinath Hill after offering 'pujas' at a Shiva temple there. Three of the dead have been identified, the sources said.

**WW II bomb found in London:** Two thousand people have been evacuated from their homes in east London after the discovery of an unexploded World War II bomb, police said late Monday. AFP reports from London.

The bomb was found during the afternoon by builders working on a site in the London district of Stepney, and at first 500 people were moved from their homes.

But later, a metropolitan police spokesman said the exclusion area around the site where the bomb was discovered had been widened to 100 metres, and roughly 2,000 people had been evacuated.

**CIA HQs renamed after Bush:** The House of Representatives agreed Monday with the Senate to rename the Central Intelligence Agency's headquarters after George Bush, the only president whose resume includes a stint as CIA director. AP reports from Washington.

During brief debate, lawmakers from both parties extolled Bush's long service to the nation, from his days as a World War II Navy pilot to his years in the White House. The legislation was adopted by voice vote.

The Senate already has voted to rename CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, the George HW Bush Centre for Central Intelligence. When informed of the House's action, Bush said he was "very pleased," said spokesman Michael Dannenhauer.

**New admn to run Mogadishu:** Three main Somali warlords in Mogadishu appointed a joint administration to run the Somali capital for the first time in eight years, factions declared Monday. AFP reports from Mogadishu.

Ali Mahdi Mohamed, Hussein Mohamed Aidid and Mohamed Qanyare Afarrah declared that Hussein Ali Ahmed, former military officer, was appointed as the new Governor of Mogadishu, but warlord Osman Hassan Ali Atto and Musa Sudi Yahow rejected the new appointment.

"It was a democratic process accepted by the majority of the people in Mogadishu," north Mogadishu strongman Ali Mahdi said.

## 90 feared trapped inside collapsed bldg in India

**BOMBAY, Aug 4:** Rescue services today worked against the clock to clear debris following the collapse of a seven-storey apartment block here which left nine dead and up to 90 feared trapped, officials said, reports AP.

Police said the death toll was likely to rise after pulling 13 seriously injured people from the rubble. Four were reportedly in critical condition in hospital.

The Press Trust of India quoted chief fire officer VV Rao as saying it was "difficult to hazard a guess about the number of people trapped" but local residents said around 90 were still missing.

The building, which contained a guest house, collapsed around 8:00 pm (1500 GMT) on Monday in the northern Bom-

## Congo's capital remains under curfew

## Search for renegade Rwandan mercenaries on in Kinshasa

**KINSHASA, Congo, Aug 4:** Congo's capital remained under a curfew Tuesday and troops loyal to President Laurent Kabila manned roadblocks throughout the city searching for renegade Rwandan mercenaries, reports AP.

In eastern Congo, military officers proclaimed themselves in open revolt against Kabila Monday and urged the population to oust the president.

About 14 months after charging victoriously into Kinshasa, the rebel alliance that carried Kabila to power appears to be unraveling.

"The government asks the people of Congo and those foreigners here in the country to stay calm and to stay at home until order is restored," an abrupt announcement said Monday morning on state-controlled People's Radio. "Stay at

## Installation of Mother Teresa's statue

## Minorities challenge directive of Calcutta Municipal Corp

**CALCUTTA, Aug 4:** The All India Minorities and Weaker Sections Council and Mother Teresa Memorial Committee yesterday filed a writ petition in the Calcutta High Court challenging the Calcutta Municipal Corporation's recent directive restraining the council from proceeding to install a Mother's statue here on September 5, reports PTI.

Following the council's prayer for land to install the statue, the CMC Mayor-in-Council by a resolution on July 7, agreed to conditionally provide a plot of 64 square feet in the Park Circus area for installation of the statue.

However, in a letter dated July 21, the CMC Deputy Commissioner (estate and management) requested the council not to proceed with the installation project till further notice "due to obvious reasons."

Following this development, the council wrote to the mayor, Prashanta Chatterjee, on July 23, pointing out that it had proceeded ahead considerably with its project and it was not possible to stop work at this stage. It also asked the mayor the reason for the CMC directive and warned of going to court if a re-

ply was not given within July 27.

"We have so far spent Rs 1.23 lakh on the project. If we are not allowed to go ahead, the entire amount would be wasted," the chairman of the Mother Teresa Memorial Committee and former city mayor, Shyam Sunder Gupta, said.

**Newspaper survey**  
**Obuchi cabinet gets lowest ever public rating**

**TOKYO, Aug 4:** Opinion polls published by Japanese newspapers today showed low public support for new Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi and his government, reports Reuters.

A survey by the Mainichi Shimbun found 48 per cent of respondents saying that they did not support the Obuchi cabinet — the highest disapproval rating for a new government since the newspaper began conducting such surveys in 1960.

A poll conducted by major financial daily Nihon Keizai Shimbun found 50.9 per cent of respondents disapproved of Obuchi's government.

**BAGHDAD, Aug 4:** The chief UN weapons inspector cut short his trip to Baghdad on Tuesday after talks with Iraq on dismantling Iraq's weapons of mass destruction collapsed, reports AP.

Richard Butler, head of the UN Special Commission, checked out of Baghdad's Al Rashid Hotel early in the morning and went to the UN headquarters in the capital in advance of leaving the country.

He declined to say what had caused the impasse in talks a day earlier with Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz.

"My duty is to report what has happened to the Security Council and the United Nations," Butler said. "I'm going to New York to do that."

His deputy, Charles Duelfer, told the Associated Press that Iraq had insisted on a clean bill of health from Butler. He threatened the Iraqis as saying "there is no point in continuing the talks until you report (this) to the council."

Duelfer said Butler told the Iraqis he could not certify their compliance with UN resolutions calling for the destruction of their nuclear, biological and

chemical weapons as well as long-range missiles.

"So there is no point in conducting further talks," Duelfer said, adding that "we are leaving pretty soon."

On Monday, Aziz accused Butler of being a pawn of the Americans in trying to prolong the punishing UN trade sanctions imposed on Iraq after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The sanctions ban air travel and limit the sale of oil, Iraq's economic mainstay.

This theme was echoed Tuesday by Al-Qaddisiya, the daily newspaper of Iraq's armed

forces.

"Eight years of unfair sanctions are enough," the paper said. "Butler and his men have to prove that they are UN professionals, not obedient tools of America. Otherwise, Iraq's patient people will continue a 'Jihad' (holy war) and will not allow more years of sanctions. Enough is enough."

The paper did not suggest what action the country planned, saying only that "the people's strategy is 'Jihad' until the sanctions are lifted."

Last month, Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein said in a nationally televised speech that the sanctions must be lifted this year — the first time he had set a deadline.

Government officials said that Saddam was expected to convene his Revolutionary Command Council later Tuesday to assess the situation.

The breakdown of the talks was confirmed late Monday by Danilo Turk, president of the UN Security Council in New York.

Danilo said Butler would be in New York by Wednesday at the latest to brief the council.

"This is a difficult moment," said Turk, who is the Slovenian ambassador to the council. "It is not easy to have the discussions cut short, it is disturbing. We will have to see what Mr. Butler brings."

A US State Department official said the decision to pull out was Iraq's.

"Iraq's action to break off talks is disturbing. We, of course, want to wait for Chairman Butler's report to the council, probably on Thursday, before assessing what cancellation of the talks means," said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity.



United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, centre, hosts a dinner at his residence in New York for the foreign ministers of Indonesia, Ali Alatas, left, and Portugal, Jaime Gama, Monday. — AP/UNB photo

## Hundreds die as China orders to blow up dykes along Yangtze

**HONG KONG, Aug 4:** Hundreds of soldiers and residents were killed as Chinese authorities ordered dykes along the Yangtze River to be blown up to prevent major cities being engulfed by rising flood waters, a rights groups said here Tuesday, reports AP.

At least 150 soldiers from the People's Liberation Army (PLA) from an air force unit based in central Chinese city of Wuhan lost their lives along with several hundreds residents who were fighting flood waters, the Information Centre of Human Rights and Democratic Movement in China said.

The incident happened on Saturday in Jiayu county, some 70 km north in the upper reaches of Yangtze River in

Wuhan, spokesman Frank Lu said.

Lu said hundreds of residents were drowned from the sudden deluge of flood waters in the countryside.

As of Monday, at least nine bodies of PLA soldiers were recovered but the Chinese authorities have imposed a news blackout over the event.

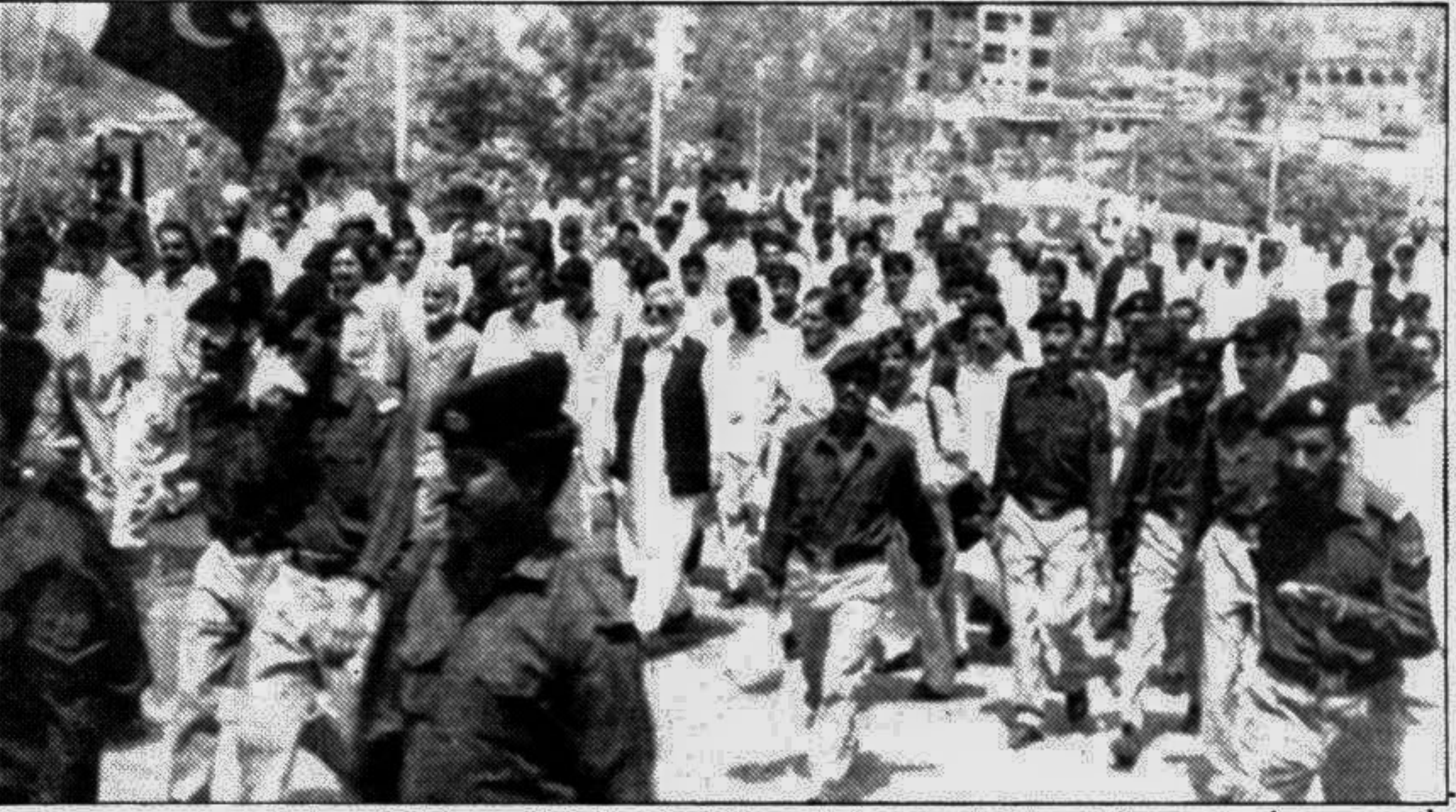
The water level in the Yangtze River in Wuhan has meanwhile dropped some 10 millimeters (half an inch).

China only admitted on Monday it had begun blowing up dykes along the Yangtze River to flood the countryside in a bid to prevent major cities being engulfed by the river.

The strategy was aimed at protecting Wuhan — a major industrial city with a population of seven million that has been threatened for weeks by the record high waters on China's longest river, the report said.

Flooding along the Yangtze — the worst since 1954, when 33,000 died — had already left millions homeless, and many of these evacuees are living in poor health conditions atop dykes, an International Red Cross official told AFP.

Flooding across southern China since the start of May killed at least 1,200 people, according to official reports issued before the most severe wave of Yangtze flooding that began July 25.



Kashmiri acting Prime Minister Sahibzada Ishaq Zafar, centre (wearing sun glasses and dark vest), march towards United Nations office in Muzaffarabad, Monday, to handover a protest memorandum to condemn Indian attack on villages along the line of control in Pakistan-held Kashmir. Dozens of people including soldiers were killed by Indian army shelling since last Thursday. — AP/UNB photo

## Artillery exchanges ease across Kashmir border

**NEW DELHI, Aug 4:** An Indian soldier died in an overnight shelling attack by Pakistan, but firing across then disputed Kashmir border has eased after five days of artillery exchanges, officials said today, reports Reuters.

"At night there was some shelling in Poonch," KB Jandial, spokesman of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir government, told Reuters by telephone from Srinagar.

"Otherwise, the intensity which was unprecedented is not there," he added.

More than 80 people, most of them civilians, have died since last Thursday when cross-border shelling escalated. India rules two-thirds of the troubled Kashmir Valley and Pakistan the remainder.

Relations between the arch-rivals, which have fought two wars over Kashmir since their independence from Britain in 1947, have worsened since May, when the two nations staged nuclear tests.

In guerrilla violence linked by India to the Kashmir problem, suspected separatists shot dead 34 villagers in two attacks in the hill state of Himachal Pradesh early on Monday. Himachal Pradesh borders Kashmir.

The guerrillas struck in incidents considered rare outside Kashmir as Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee renewed a conditional offer of talks with Pakistan on the troubled region.

"The incidents are worrisome," Vajpayee told agitated lawmakers in Parliament today. "They seem to be planned and there seems to be a political motive behind it," he said.

"To ensure that such incidents are not repeated, government will take firm steps. All appropriate steps will be taken," he added.

## Colombian rebels suspend peace talks, admit kidnapping

**BOGOTA, Aug 4:** Leftist rebels have suspended peace talks with civic leaders and confirmed that they abducted a ruling party senator, reports AP.

Jailed representatives of the 5,000-member National Liberation Army, or ELN, had planned to meet Monday with business and civic leaders in a prison near Medellin, the country's second largest city.

The contacts were supposed to help pave the way for direct negotiations with President-elect Andres Pastrana, who takes office August 7.

The decision to suspend the talks follows a weekend of rebel attacks — including the abduction Saturday of Sen. Carlos Espinosa — that left eight dead and raised doubts about the guerrillas' desire for peace.

The ELN pledged last month to scale back kidnappings and attacks on civilian installations as a gesture to improve the climate for peace.

Violence between rebels, the army and rightist paramilitary groups has forced hundreds of thousands of Colombians to flee their homes.

In the latest such incident, several thousand peasants have fled to the oil-refining city of Barrancabermeja, some 265 kilometers northeast of Bogota.



Michael Jackson, centre, is greeted by fans during a campaign stop in Detroit on Monday, where he campaigned in favour of a proposal for an entertainment complex he plans on building with Detroit businessman Don Barden. The vote will take place on Tuesday. — AP/UNB photo

## Resolve disputes thru' talks, UK urges India, Pakistan

**LONDON, Aug 4:** The British government Monday called on Pakistan and India to resolve their differences through negotiations amid reports that the two sides had clashed for the sixth day on the disputed Kashmir border, reports AP.

Foreign Office Minister Derek Fatchett said reports of shootings across the line of control between Pakistani-controlled Kashmir and the area under Indian control "can only add to the already high levels of tension."

Fatchett, who has just returned from a tour of Southeast Asia, added: "It is essential that India and Pakistan resolve their differences through dialogue."

"Both countries have agreed on a number of confidence-building measures in the past to prevent incidents along the line of control. These should now be fully implemented," he said.

Fatchett also referred to the

recent nuclear tests by India and Pakistan, saying the two countries "need to take positive steps on nuclear non-proliferation and regional security."

Indian military officials said today that Pakistani army artillery units had opened fire at border posts in the northern Kashmir area of Uri, Kupwara and Gurez, between 100-150 kilometres from here.

There was no report of casualties.

The latest shelling, on top of heavy firing during the past week which has claimed more than 90 lives on both sides of the border, came before the arrival in the region of Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes.

Two-thirds of Kashmir is controlled by India and the northern one-third by Pakistan.

India and Pakistan have fought two of their three wars over the state.

## NATO threatens airstrikes on Kosovo again

**WASHINGTON, Aug 4:** Declaring that a new Serb offensive could generate a humanitarian disaster, the US government said on Monday that NATO had approved contingency plans to use firepower against Serb forces in Kosovo, reports AP.

The plans, focused on an aerial assault, are being fine-tuned by the NATO council, State Department officials said.

There was no immediate word on what would trigger an attack by NATO. Nor was it clear whether the administration was trying mostly to unnerve Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic by raising the threat against publicly.

US officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Milosevic might have been emboldened to launch the offensive in Kosovo by the absence of a public threat over the last several weeks.

In the Serbian province, a weekend of fighting displaced tens of thousands of people, some of them held up in forests beyond the immediate reach of relief organisations.

"The living conditions are clearly deplorable," State Department spokesman James P Rubin said. "What I'm talking about is the humanitarian catastrophe that could occur in a matter of weeks if we don't get the aid to the people who are in desperate need."

The offensive broke a pledge by Milosevic to halt Serb attacks so US and European diplomats could try to arrange talks for a settlement between Belgrade and ethnic Albanian insurgents in the Serbian province.

State Department officials declined to offer analyses on whether Milosevic was trying to strengthen his negotiating hand with gains on the ground or trying to rupture the diplomatic drive.

Instead, he pointedly raised a threat that NATO could use to the assistance of the beleaguered ethnic Albanian civilians. "I think it's important to note that a set of contingency plans has now been approved by NATO, and that is an important development," Rubin said.

However, he also indicated an attack was not imminent, saying "further refinement is ongoing."

## China excluded from US DV 2000 lottery

**WASHINGTON, Aug 4:** China is among nations excluded from an annual lottery programme to issue some 55,000 US permanent resident visas to people from regions with low US immigration rates, reports AP.

In a statement Monday, the US State Department said countries barred from the "diversity lottery" are nations from which the United States has received more than 50,000 immigrants during the last five years.

The list of countries that do not qualify is subject to change each year.

Excluded from the "diversity visa" 2000 lottery are Britain, Canada, China, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, India, Jamaica, Mexico, Poland, the Philippines, South Korea and Vietnam, the department said. Taiwan also is excluded. People born in Hong Kong and in Northern Ireland remain eligible.

Applicants must have either a high school education or its equivalent. Or they must have two years of work experience requiring at least two years of training within the last five years.

## Khartoum declares unilateral truce

## Sudanese govt, rebel delegates in Ethiopia to talk peace

**ADDIS ABABA, Aug 4:** With a war-induced famine killing hundreds of people a day, representatives of the Sudanese government and rebels fighting in southern Sudan have again agreed to put down their weapons and look for a solution to their 15-year-old civil war, reports AP.

The government in Khartoum announced a unilateral cease-fire throughout southern Sudan Monday to allow humanitarian relief to reach and estimated 1.5 million people threatened by famine. Talks to end the fighting were set to begin today.

The latest cease-fire expands the scope of a three-month truce agreed to last month between the government and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army in the hardest-hit southwestern region of Bhar el Ghazal.

The government of Sudan has declared an indefinite cease-fire as of (Tuesday) to facilitate the distribution of relief supplies to the drought and war victims," Sudanese Foreign Minister Mustafa Ismail told reporters upon his arrival in Addis Ababa Monday evening.

The mainly African, Christian and animist southerners have been fighting the Islamic.

Arabized north since 1983 for greater autonomy.

The last major ceasefire, brokered by former US President Jimmy Carter, was signed in March 1995 and lasted two months. The government then extended it another two months.

## Lankan death toll rises to 63

**COLOMBO, Aug 4:** Tamil Tiger rebels mounted a ferocious attack against government positions in northern Sri Lanka Monday, causing heavy casualties and raising the death toll to 63 on both sides, officials said, reports AP.

Gunmen from the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) launched the defense assault on a military-held town of Mankulam, the defence ministry said in a statement.

"Fierce fighting went on till the early hours and during the fire fight, 37 LTTE cadres had been killed and security forces recovered 16 dead bodies of terrorists along with 18 T-56 weapons," the ministry said.