BUILFILY



President Clinton, his wife Hillary and daughter Chelsea make their way from Marine One to the White House Sunday after returning from their vacation at Martha's Vineyard.

— AP/UNB photo

Floods claim 16 in Nepal: At least 16 people were killed and 13 are reported missing after flash floods and landslides struck the hilly eastern district of Syangja, police and newspapers said yesterday. AFP reports

from Kathmandu.

Torrential rains late Sunday caused several rivers in Syangja district, some 230 kilometers west of here to overflow, eight of the dead were from the same family.

3rd quake in Tibet in 5 days:
The third earthquake in five days has shaken Tibet's remote Xainza area, some 250 kilometers northwest of Lhasa, the official Xinhua news agency reported yesterday, AFP says from

Measuring 5.1 on the Richter scale, it struck Sunday at 11:37 am (0337 GMT) and followed a 6.0-magnitude temblor on the same spot on Tuesday, the report said, quoting the state seismological bureau.

Beijing.

Gunmen kill 3 more in Karachi: Gunmen shot dead three people Sunday in Karachi bringing to 11 the death toll from two days of violence, police said, AFP reports from Karachi.

Bullet-riddled bodies of two young men were recovered from the toilet of a wedding hall in the city's western Pak Colony, while another person was shot dead in the eastern Koreangi district, they said.

Lanka orders inquiry into accident:
Suspecting sabotage Sri Lanka's railroad authority ordered an inquiry yesterday into a collision between two passenger trains that killed seven people and left 20 injured, AP says from

Colombo.
Initial investigations into Sunday's accident at Mirigama, about 50 kilometres northeast of Colombo, indicated tampering with the rail track, the general manager of the railways, WKB Weragama, was quoted as saying by The Island newspaper.

Chlorine leakage at HK factory:
Twenty-five people were hospitalised and 350 people were
evacuated following a chemical leak in a factory yesterday
radio reports said, AP says from Hong Kong.

Fire officials said the leaked chlorine was suspected to have come from the sewage treatment facility in the basement of the factory, which is in an industrial area, state-owned Radio Hong Kong reported.

1.5 m marooned in North India floods Rescue workers overwhelmed by massive destruction

NEW DELHI, Aug 31: Rescue workers, overwhelmed by the havoc wreaked by the floods swamping northern India, could do little more Monday than pull bloated bodies from the turbulent waters believed to have killed more than 1,000 people in three weeks, reports

Working with less than 1,500 boats — most of them aging, cracked rowboats — government workers and private aid organisation tried to reach 20 villages that were reported submerged in torrential rains overnight in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state and one of its poorest. But there were no signs of the villages in the unending stretch of flood

"They destruction is so overwhelming that rescue efforts seen futile," said Kripa

DPRK rejects ROK offer to exchange special envoys

SEOUL, Aug 31: North Korea officially rejected Monday a South Korean proposal to exchange special envoys to discuss peace on the divided Korean peninsula reports AP

rean peninsula, reports AP.

The North's official Korean
Central News Agency (KCNA)
said Monday that the proposal,
made by South Korean President Kim Dae-jung in an Aug. 15
Independence Day address, had
been "unanimously rejected"
because of its "fantastic, contradictory and deceptive na-

The KCNA said rapprochement talks between the two Koreas are meaningless unless South Korea changes its policy of relying on "outside forces" for reunification of the peninsula.

Shankar Pandey, a local reporter who lives in Gorakhpur at the centre of the disaster

Jeetendra Singh, a government administrator in Gorakhpur, said an estimated 1.5 million villagers were surrounded by flood waters and marooned. Authorities were trying to fly in at least 300 sturdy, motorised boats from Calcutta and Bombay on air force planes. Currently, only 11 motorised boats are available for rescue operations, said Singh, reached by telephone.

Thousands of acres of standing crops were submerged under water, along with tens of thousands of homes. Officials had not begun estimating the amount of damage to property and livestock.

Based on the number of corpses recovered, officials put the number of dead at 119. But residents and local newspaper reported as many as 1,020 dead.

At least one hastily built shelter was itself submerged, said Pandey. Refugees from the shelter swam to higher areas and were forced to spend the night in the rain, he said. Air force helicopters dropped food and tarpaulins to people marooned on their rooftops, Singh

Rivers in eastern Uttar Pradesh state continued to rise. The Rapti River, which flows through Gorakhpur, broke its embankment in 20 places. A power station south of Gorakhpur was shut down because of the rising water and a railway station was submerged.

Two thousand trucks loaded with food and supplies were stranded on a national highway which links Gorakhpur to the state capital of Lucknow.

Afghan govt reiterates claims

Pakistan backs Taliban

DURBAN, South Africa, Aug 31: Afghanistan's government reiterated on Sunday its claims that the Taliban movement which controls much of the country is being backed by Pakistan and demanded the immediate withdrawal of that support, reports Reuters.

Afghanistan's Deputy Foreign Minister Abdulla Abdulla said the government — which controls less than 10 per cent of Afghan territory — planned to hold talks with neighbouring countries on Pakistan's involvement in the conflict.

Abdulla is part of the Afghan delegation attending the non-aligned movement summit in Durban, on South Africa's east

"The part of Afghanistan which is under Taliban control is occupied land because it is being occupied by terrorists, by Pakistani military personnel and terrorists from all over the world," Abdulla said in an in-

"Our message to Pakistan would be that if they believe they can occupy Afghanistan, they should look at recent history," he said in reference to previous Russian and British

occupations of the country.

Pakistan has denied it is backing the Taliban, which has imposed strict Islamic Sharia law in the areas it controls.

Pakistan is one of only three

countries which recognise the Taliban as the official government, the others being Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Abdulla said evidence that Pakistan was giving military

Pakistan was giving military backing to the Taliban came to light after recent meetings between Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani, forced out by the Taliban, and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

"President Rabbani met Sharif in Alma Ata (in Kazakhstan) recently and just a few days after that the Pakistani support for Taliban increased dramatically," he said, citing United Nations reports of arms and ammunition shipments across Pakistan's northern border into Afghanistan.

"On another occasion Rabbani met Sharif in Islamabad and the northeastern province was attacked from Pakistani soil by Taliban supporters," he said.

Neighbouring Iran and Russia which, along with the United Nations, still recognise Rabbani's government, have also charged that Pakistan is backing the Taliban.

Afghan officials, including Rabbani who arrives in South Africa on Tuesday, will hold talks with India, Uzbek, Iranian and Egyptian officials at the summit here to discuss the situation, sources close to the conflict said.

Political crisis in Pakistan

Another regional party quits ruling alliance

QUETTA, Pakistan, Aug 31: Another Pakistani regional political party withdrew its support for Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's government on Sunday but political sources said the move would not threaten the stability of the ruling coalition, reports Reuters.

But the Jamhoori Watan Party's (JWP) decision to break away from the coalition led by the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) could make a difference in parliament, where Sharif introduced a controversial constitutional amendment bill on Friday seeking to establish the Islamic Sharia code as Pakistan's "supreme law."

"It is now becoming difficult to continue to support him (Sharif) without any reciprocation from him," JWP president Akbar Bugi, a tribal chieftain, told a news conference at Quetta, capital of Baluchistan province in southwestern Pakistan.

"Moreover, the spring of goodwill is now running dry, and hence we will be last of his allies to leave him because of his attitude," he said.

Sharif has the required twothirds majority in the 216-seat National Assembly (lower house) for the passage of the constitutional amendment, which has been widely criticised by his political opponents. But the situation is unclear in the 87-seat Senate (upper house) after the desertion of three parties from the al-

Four days ago, a key regional political party, Mutthida Na-

tional Movement (MQM), quit its alliance for alleged failure to fulfill pledges, threatening the PML-led coalition government in the volatile southern province of Sindh.

The Awami National Party, based in the North West Frontier Province, quit the alliance with Sharif in February when he refused to back its demand to rename the province Pakhtoonkhwa to reflect its dominant ethnic Pashtun, or Pakhtoon, population.

Bugti, whose party has two members in the national assembly and five in the senate, denounced Sharif's Islamisation bill as his "last and desperate attempt to exploit Islam to try to keep his sinking political, broken down raft afloat."

Former arms inspector says

US fears confrontation with Iraq

WASHINGTON, Aug 31: The United States fears confrontation with Iraq and has ceded to Saddam Hussein the capacity to rebuild his arsenal, a former arms inspector who quit over US policy said Sunday, reports AP.

Scott Ritter, an American who resigned from the UN inspection team last week, repeated charges that US foreign policy-makers intervened to stop inspections that might have led to another showdown with Iraq.

In an interview published Sunday by Newsweek, Ritter said: "I heard somebody say Madeleine Albright blocked more inspections in 1997 than Saddam Hussein did. It's a funny quip, but unfortunately it's true."

He said on ABC television that the United States is too unsure of itself internationally to formulate a tougher Iraq policy. "I believe that the United States does not want such confrontation because it believes it cannot muster the support for such confrontation," he said.

He also predicted that as a result of the pullback in inspections, "six months is a very reasonable time scale for Iraq to resume weapons capabilities."

bassador to the United Nations, appearing on NBC television and CNN, defended the US policy, which he described as successful in isolating Iraq and maintaining tough economic sanctions. And he denied that the United States or Albright, the secretary of state, had ordered inspectors not to inspect.

"Yes, you discuss timing and tactics, but at no time did we go to (UN arms inspector chief Richard) Butler and say, "Don't inspect," Richardson said. This is a UN decision, this is Butler's decision. He is very independent."

dent."
On ABC, Ritter cited two instances that he said constituted interference with the inspection regime:

— In July, 45 inspectors were on the ground in Iraq ready to look into how Iraq hides its weapons of mass destruction. They were called back under pressure from the United States and Britain, he said.

— In August, with another team deployed, Albright and White House National Security Adviser Samuel Berger "had the inspection first postponed for a matter of days and then can-

celed outright."

There is an illusion of arms control taking place," Ritter said. "Right now we are not doing meaningful inspections in Iraq, and if people do not change course the end result will be that Iraq will be able to

retain these capabilities."

Ritter said he resigned to bring what he called the "failure" of US and UN policy "into the public eye."

The Senate returns from summer recess next week, and senate Republicans have made clear they will look into Ritter's charges and the administration's approach to Iraq.

Ambassador Richardson said US forces, primed to strike Iraq last February before Saddam reached a deal on inspections with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, remain ready to attack if action is warranted.

Thousands pay tribute to Diana

CRATHIE, Scotland, Aug 31:
A year after Princess Diana's death, thousands of people commemorated one of the most public lives of modern times Monday, while those who knew her best marked the anniversary of a very private grief in the seclusion of their Scottish castle, reports AP.

Diana's beloved boys, Prince William, 16, and Prince Harry, 13, were with the rest of the royal family at Balmoral Castle, where their father woke them last Aug. 31 to tell them of their mother's fatal car crash.

The pile of flowers at the gates of the princess' former home at Kensington Palace in London grew to about a thousand bouquets Monday morning. Messages in many languages, photographs taken from newspapers, and paper hearts adorned he black and gold palace gates. Scores of well-wishers held an all-night candle-lit vigil, and public memorial services were planned at the city's great cathedrals.

The national flag, the Union Jack, flew at half staff on government buildings and royal residences, as an official symbol of the personal and public remembrance of Diana.

But for Diana's family it was a day for quiet reflection — private prayers for her sons at the tiny stone church of Crathie parish, just outside Balmoral Castle's gates and across the rushing waters of the River Dee, and a private service near her island grave at her family's ancestral home, Althorp, for her brother and sisters.

The queen on Monday thanked people who have sent many messages of sympathy, through the royal website as well as in the mail.

"The queen and the royal

"The queen and the royal family, particularly the Prince of Wales, Prince William and Prince Harry, would like to thank people for their messages and kind gestures of sympathy



A mother and her daughter gather their thoughts at a makeshift monument for Diana, Princess of Wales, in Paris Sunday.

— AP UNB photo

at this sad time and for sharing their remembrance of the Princess of Wales," said a royal statement.

Crowds and congregations in London, Paris and at Balmoral remembered Diana Sunday and early Monday with tears, flowers and prayers. But there were no repeats of last year's huge crowds — just a constant stream of people visiting Kensington Palace, Althorp and to the scene of the Paris car crash a year

At Crathie church on Sunday, the royal family heard the Rev. Robert Sloan pray for them

"Hear our prayers for those grieving the loss of a loved one in circumstances known to the world but only experienced by a few." Sloan said, as William and Harry sat on either side of their father, Prince Charles, in the front pew.

At Althorp, away from the public gaze, Diana's brother, Earl Spencer and her sisters,

Lady Sarah McCorquodale and Lady Jane Fellowes, planned a service near her burial site on an island in an ornamental lake. The estate and the museum in Diana's memory closed for the season Sunday after receiving 152,000 visitors.

At St. James's Palace, where Harry and William live in London with Prince Charles, Diana's former employees and other members of the royal household were expected to attend a service of remembrance in the chapel where the princess's coffin rested before her funeral.

Diana's face appeared on front pages of most of the national newspapers on Sunday, and half a dozen special programmes were offered on television.

A granite and bronze sculpture of Diana and Dodi Fayed, the lover with whom she died, was unveiled Monday at Harrods, the London store owned by Fayed's father.

17 die in bus accident in Pak-held Kashmir

ISLAMABAD, Aug 31: At least 17 people were killed and 44 injured Sunday when a crowded bus plunged into a ravine in Pakistani controlled Kashmir police said, reports

They said the driver of the vehicle lost control near Teray, four kilometres from the state capital Muzaffarabad.

Police said the overloaded

Police said the overloaded bus was carrying 65 passengers. Fourteen people died on the spot while three others died later in hospital. The condition of several injured people was reported serious.

Polls in Cambodia Opposition pleas for recount rejected

PHNOM PENH, Aug 31: Cambodia's highest appeals body today rejected opposition pleas for recounts in last month's elections as an unprecedented sit-in protest against the polls fuelled rising tensions, reports AFP.

The constitutional council rule that recount requests filed by the royalist Funcinpec Party of deposed co-premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh and the self-named party of dissident Sam Rainsy were without

The two parties alleged that widespread vote fraud and irregularities robbed them of electoral victory and have been demonstrating against the election and strongman Hun Sensince last week.

The parties had not submitted their requests properly to election officials and random recounts done anyway in eight municipalities showed less than a one per cent difference from the original returns, the council said, upholding the national election committee's decision to reject the complaints.

Communists will vote against Chernomyrdin

MOSCOW, Aug 31: The communists, the largest political force in the Russian Parliament will vote against confirming Viktor Chernomyrdin as prime minister, their leader Gennady Zyuganov said Sunday on television, reports AFP.

"Chernomyrdin has taken part in the collapse of the economy," Zyuganov said.

The communist leader also said his party would reject an agreement reached earlier Sunday that would dilute the powers of President Boris Yeltsin and strengthen the hand of the government and parliament.

Adulterated mustard oil claims 27 in New Delhi

NEW DELHI, Aug 31: There is no respite yet from the dropsy epidemic, which has claimed at least two more lives in the Indian capital since Saturday, reports IANS.

As many as 355 more patients have been admitted into various hospitals here with dropsy symptoms. The toll from dropsy, a disease caused by the consumption of adulterated mustard oil, has risen to 27 in Delhi.

Though a few cases have been reported from the states of Bihar and Assam, no deaths have been reported from other states so far. Yet, in response to the countrywide panic and as a precautionary measure, six more states - Maharashtra Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Tripura, Meghalaya and Manipur - have banned the sale of suspect mustard oil. Out of the 25 Indian states, now 14 have prohibited the sale of one of the most common cooking oils used in the country. The Delhi police, which has been conducting raids in shops, godowns and mills, has made more arrests. The alleged kingpin was arrested three days ago. The police has already registered about 90 cases and sent teams to neigh-

bouring states.

With dropsy cases being reported from new neighbourhoods, the Delhi government has deputed as many as 31 teams across the capital to collect samples and ensure enforcement of the ban on sale of mustard oil.

Malaysia observes National Day

GELUGOR, Malaysia, Aug 31: As F-18 fighter jets shrieked above the dark rain clouds, thousands of Malaysians who came to see their leader and watch the National Day parade on Monday arched their necks, looking for the distant thunder, reports AP.

Army helicopters clattered nearby. Soldiers marched down the street, barking commands. People stood at attention as the national anthem was played.

For most of Malaysia's 22

million citizens, giddiness over their nation's breakneck economic growth has long turned to sober preparations for even stormier days.

Malaysia's export-driven

Malaysia's export-driven economy has ground to a halt, with its booming 8 per cent growth for the last decade shrinking by nearly 7 per cent this quarter, pitching the country into full-blown recession.

Death toll in Ecuadoran plane crash rises to 82

QUITO, Aug 31: Rescue workers found more bodies in the smoking wreckage of a Cuban passenger jet Sunday bringing the death toll in the crash to 82, reports AFP.

reports AFP.

Three more bodies were pulled from the wreckage of the Tupolev 154, while another passenger died in hospital.

Rescue workers found the three after a crane raised the back end of the aircraft, a police spokesman told reporters but it was not immediately clear if they were passengers or residents of El Rosario, the neighbourhood at the end of the runway.

The body of another victim a 55-year-old man, was found underneath a collapsed wall of a house at the crash site by searchers aided by a sniffer dog. The Russian made aircraft

owned by Cubana De Avacion was carrying 90 people; 76 passengers and 14 crew when it crashed Saturday on takeoff from Mariscal Sucre Interna-

At least 10 people died on the ground including children playing soccer in a field adjacent to the airport north of the Ecuadoran capital.

"We hope there are no more bodies" said General Oswaldo Dominguez, Ecuador's Civil Aviation Director, "We have

plane survived the crash.

Fifty-seven of those aboard

were Ecuadoran, with 23

Cubans and 10 from other coun-

tries. Several people on the

tional Airport here.

the remains of the plane for analysis, Dominguez told AFP.

Searcherrs continued to look for the aircraft's flight recorders that would reveal the

information that 20 gravely in-

jured people have been taken to various hospitals. If there are

no more dead to be found, we

can concentrate on recovering

cause of the disaster.

Cuban experts arrived Sunday to assist in the investiga-

`Junta won't sit idly if NLD ignites unrest'

YANGON, Aug 31: Myanmar's military government warned today that the armed forces would not stand idly by if the country's pro-democracy opposition tries to stir up un-

rest, reports Reuters.

Commentaries in state-controlled newspapers said it was impossible at this unsuitable time," to call a parliament. National League for Democracy (NLD) leader Aung San Suu Kyi told supporters at the weekend that she would convene a "people's parliament" in September in a direct challenge to the military government's authority.

"If the party cannot call (parliament), what will it do next? Is the NLD going to make instigations for an outbreak of civil strife?" a commentary in the New Light of Myanmar asked.

asked.
"Is it going to launch attacks with alien assistance to grab power? Is the Tatmadaw (armed

forces) going to stay idle if the

NLD starts aggressive campaigns or repulse attacks? it

The article referred back to mob violence during Myan-mar's 1988 uprising for democracy, which the military crushed, killing thousands of people, according to opposition estimates.

The opposition has become increasingly assertive in recent months in its campaign to try to force the government to recognise the results of the country's last general election in 1990, which the NLD won by a landslide.

Last week, college students staged their first street protests since 1996.

Government officials have said calling a parliament of those elected in 1990 would be illegal and state media have suggested the opposition should be outlawed and Suu Kyi deported if the party proceeds with its plans.



A child with a picture of Lebanon's missing Shi'ite Muslim spiritual leader Imam Mousa Sadr during a rally Sunday in the southern Lebanese town of Nabatiyeh, marking the 20th anniversary of Sadr's disappearance. Sadr went missing during a visit to Libya in August 1978. Shi'ite leaders have blamed Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi for Sadr's disappearance.

— AP/UNB photo

Jewish militants threaten Netanyahu

JERUSALEM, Aug 31: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and members of his Cabinet have been threatened by Jewish militants who aim to derail peace talks with the Palestinians, Netanyahu's aide said Sunday, reports AP.

And Israel radio reported

that the Shin Bet internal security agency believes that the same militants have hatched plans to strike at the Temple Mount, home to Islam's third holiest shrine. Netanyahu has met inten-

Netanyahu has met intensively over the past week with members of the Shin Bet security service, which is in charge of protecting VIPs, after receiving the warnings.

"There are reports of plans by extremists, specifically Jewish extremists, to hurt the prime minister, the defence minister, and other officials as long as the peace process continues and through its completion," Netanyahu's spokesman Aviv Bushinsky told Channel

The threats are especially chilling in a country which was traumatised by the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in November 1995 by an ultra-nationalist Jew opposed to handing over land in exchange for peace with the Palestinians.

Last week, a member of the outlawed anti-Arab Kach party, from the Jewish settlement in

Hebron, West Bank, was charged with incitement for calling Israel's moderate president a traitor who should be removed from power.

Also, Israel radio and Chan-

nel 2 TV reported that Netanyahu and other ministers were briefed in a special session with security chiefs Sunday on plans by Jewish militant groups to carry out an attack on the Temple Mount.

Israel radio said police were beefing-up security at the site, which has been the target of such groups in the past. The Temple Mount — home to the Al-Aqsa mosque and above Judaism's holiest site, the Western Wall — is at the centre of the Mideast conflict. An assault on the site would likely trigger violence and upset chances for continuing peace talks.

According to Zeev Schiff, an Israeli intelligence expert who writes for the daily Haaretz newspaper, recent Shin Bet security assessments point to a civil war in Israel's future.

"They (Shin Bet officials) said extreme right-wing groups could fight one another or the Israeli army, in other words, a civil war," Schiff told Israel Television, "In the past year, there are groups that are more extreme right, their ideology is more extreme and they simply want to end the peace process," Schiff said.