

## Commonwealth Update

DEREK INGRAM

*ABSTRACT Three veteran Commonwealth prime ministers stepped down—Jean Chretien of Canada after 10 years, Anerood Jugnauth of Mauritius after a total of 16, and Mohamad Mahathir of Malaysia after 22. The new faces were Paul Martin, Paul Berenger and Abdullah Badawi. India and Pakistan edged towards talking peace, but in Sri Lanka the peace process halted when the president suspended parliament and clashed head-on with her prime minister. Serious rioting hit the Maldives. The shutting down of the only independent daily newspaper in Zimbabwe came when new 1000 dollar notes would not even buy a loaf of bread. In London a judge turned down the claim for compensation by the long-evicted islanders of Diego Garcia.*

### Zimbabwe

In a speech in Abuja, Nigeria (1 September 2003) in advance of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting Secretary-General Don McKinnon said: 'There can be no question of a return to the status quo ante when 80 per cent of the best agricultural land in Zimbabwe was in the hands of the white minority. The challenge ... is to ensure that the land is farmed productively by providing the new farmers with titles to their land and giving them the necessary technical and material assistance to start off.'

Later (15 October) he said in Johannesburg: 'No country can afford to carry the baggage of the historical injustices which Zimbabwe was laden with at independence ... It is not for those outside its border to lecture, pontificate, order or direct. But the international community can certainly encourage, assist, facilitate ... Sadly, our overtures have been spurned. President Mugabe's government has chosen to keep us at arm's length.'

The Supreme Court ruled that the country's only independent daily newspaper, *The Daily News*, founded in 1999, was illegal. A day later (12 September) armed paramilitary police burst into its offices and ordered all staff to switch off the computers and leave. It was the first time a newspaper in Zimbabwe had been banned since the white Rhodesian government outlawed a paper of a similar name 40 years ago. The paper had lost a court battle over the constitutionality of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act. When it

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refused to register under the law the Supreme Court said it must do so before it could question the law.

Police arrested several staff members and loaded the paper's computers into lorries. The paper then filed to register with the state media commission and a High Court judge ordered the commission to let the paper reopen (25 October). The judge said the commission was improperly constituted and gave the government until 20 November to appoint a new body. The staff produced 120 000 copies of one eight-page edition of the paper. They were sold out in hours. Police again occupied the office and arrested 18 journalists and four directors. The paper was silenced once more.

Lawyer Beatrice Mtetwa, who had been involved in defending journalists and others fighting for press freedom, filed charges of assault against police who she said had severely beaten her up (16 October).

The High Court ruled (8 August) that the treason case against opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai should proceed, saying there was enough evidence that he had plotted to kill President Robert Mugabe. Charges against other leaders of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), Welshman Ncube and Renson Gasela, were dismissed.

The MDC defeated ZANU-PF in local council elections across the country (2 September), winning 137 of the 222 council seats contested in 21 cities and towns. Turnout was low, but MDC candidates won seven of eight contested mayoral posts. In Kariba MDC candidate John Houghton became the first white man to win a mayor's seat since independence. On the same day the MDC won a parliamentary by-election in Harare North but lost one in rural Makonde.

A government directive that ruling party officials should distribute all international aid (22 August) led the UN World Food Programme (WFP) to shut its three field offices. The government denied charges that it had used food shipments as a political weapon and WFP later played down the political problems as 'minor and dispersed'. About 3.5 million people were receiving aid. At a white farmers' meeting (7 August) it was said Zimbabwe maize output had fallen to 180 000 tons from 810 000 in 2000 and tobacco to 80 000 tonnes from 236 000 in 2000. The government said (23 October) its land resettlement programme had been 'an outstanding success' and would produce double its domestic consumption of maize in 2003. But a commission set up by Mugabe to review the four-year campaign said only 123 000 of the 350 0000 officially resettled families had actually moved on to land allocated to them for small-scale farming. Its report, which Mugabe had given to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, said that this 'implied a considerable amount of land lying fallow or unused'. It blamed shortcomings in reform on 'a relentless foreign media campaign of vilification and the imposition of sanctions by the UK and its European partners, the white Commonwealth and the USA'.

The mainly white Commercial Farmers Union split into two factions when the Matabeleland chairman quit the organization because of 'weak leadership strategies'. Many members formed a new body called Justice for Agriculture.

As inflation gathered pace a 70 per cent rise in petrol prices (21 October) followed only five weeks after a 160 per cent overnight rise. The state fuel company ran dry, halting government departments and stopping many trains, buses and cars. A 1000-dollar note was launched, but it was not enough to buy a loaf of bread. Banknotes for Z\$5000, Z\$10 000 and Z\$20 000 were printed in full on one side only.

Mugabe set up a nine-minister taskforce at the end of October to resolve the currency crisis. He said he would 'restructure' the Reserve Bank as a 'developmental institution', naming ruling party loyalist Gideon Gono as the new governor. The official rate of the Zimbabwe dollar was 824 to the US dollar but in the parallel market it was being traded at 6000. Inflation was running at 455 per cent. But, paradoxically, industrial share prices on the Zimbabwe stock exchange had risen 575 per cent since January.

Speculation that Mugabe might be planning to step down was confounded by news that he was building a 25-bedroom mansion 15 miles out of Harare, with helicopter pad and extensive communication lines. The constructors were Yugoslav, supervised by Mugabe's wife.

Mugabe travelled to New York for the UN General Assembly. He called UN institutions 'anachronistic and inadequate' and said the Security Council increasingly 'lacked legitimacy in the eyes of the developing world' (26 September).

A report released in Johannesburg (5 September) by the Solidarity Peace Trust said 60 000 Zimbabwean youths had been trained by the Mugabe regime in the use of weapons and torture techniques and ordered to use violence against opposition supporters. The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Bulawayo, Pius Ncube, said many were child soldiers.

Simon Muzenda, vice-president since 1987 and unfailing supporter of Mugabe since the days of the liberation struggle, died aged 80.

Rev Canaan Banana, first president of Zimbabwe (1980–87) died aged 67 (10 November). Mugabe took over from him as executive president under a new constitution and in 1999 Banana was tried on 11 charges of sexual abuse. He fled to South Africa and was sentenced in absentia. He sought help from Nelson Mandela, who advised him to return and despatched him to the border in a state limousine. He served six months in an open prison.

## South Africa

The Cabinet decided (8 August 2003) that anti-retroviral therapy would be offered in the public health system for the first time. Only five days earlier the government had been heckled at the country's first national AIDS conference held in Durban. The decision came a day after South Africa signed, following a year's delay, an agreement to receive £25 million from the UN Global Fund to fight AIDS (9 August 2003). Health Minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang announced plans to start introducing anti-retroviral treatment in public hospitals within a month.

Aids activists, business and NGO groups were surprised and delighted by the turnaround. A civil disobedience campaign was called off and Nelson Mandela's charitable foundation said the former president was delighted. A world-wide mobile phone fund-raising drive was launched. It was known as 46664—after Mandela's number when he was imprisoned in Robben Island. To make a donation donors could dial 090 601 46664. Mandela said: 'over 18 years ... I was known as just a number. Millions of people today infected with AIDS are just that: a number.'

President Thabo Mbeki remained reluctant to accept the scale of the AIDS crisis. He told *The New York Times* while at the UN General Assembly in September: 'Personally I don't know anybody who has died of AIDS'. Activists called on him to apologize; Mbeki's own spokesman had died of AIDS in 2001.

South Africa's Competition Commission accused two companies (16 October) of charging excessively for AIDS drugs. One, Glaxo-SmithKline, simultaneously announced cuts in prices for the poorest countries.

Anglo-American launched a community partnership project that would extend its prevention and treatment of the disease in six provinces where the mining group had business units. Anglo believed 30 000 of its 124 300 local employees were HIV-positive

Bulelani Ngcuka, director of public prosecutions, found prima facie evidence of corruption against Deputy President Jacob Zuma, but declined to press charges (24 August) for fear the state could not win the case. Two-year arms procurement investigations in Durban, France and Mauritius involving French and South African companies had led an investigating team to recommend criminal prosecution. France failed to respond to a request for cooperation. Zuma said the allegations were baseless, but the scandal assumed added significance as the 2004 presidential elections approached.

In a landmark judgement (14 October) the Constitutional Court gave back to a poor community territories first taken away from it by Britain's Cape Colony in 1847. The community now became sole owners of a 100-mile strip of land between the mouth of the Orange River and the coastal town of Port Nollah. The Richtersveld people were physically removed from their land in the 1920s when diamond mining began. They now live in huts without running water or electricity. The court unanimously awarded the 5000-strong community major compensation. State lawyers said the decision would leave a £900 million hole in South Africa's annual budget because the mining income goes to the government.

An independence commission found that 1300 white farmers had been murdered since the end of apartheid, but that only 2 per cent of the attacks were racially motivated. The rest were crime-driven. Land redistribution remained a problem. In 1994 whites owned 85 per cent of the land. Ten years later only 2 per cent has been redistributed. The government target for 2010 was 30 per cent.

Ten associations of the financial services industry published its black economic empowerment charter (17 October). The aim was to move business ownership, procurement hiring and business practices towards the disadvantaged—black, Indian and mixed-race people. The charter set a timetable, but the government would only announce its plans after the 2004 elections. Three mining companies, African Rainbow Minerals, Anglo-Vaal Mining and Harmony, swapped assets and issued shares to create the largest black-controlled mining company (13 November).

The African National Congress decided to press ahead with its proposal to rename Johannesburg airport after its former president, Oliver Tambo. The airport was originally called after Jan Smuts. Name-changing has been a running debate in South Africa. Pretoria was to have been called Tshwane, but the mayor delayed a decision because business leaders and politicians opposed it. A decision to remove two statues of Paul Kruger from the national park named after him led to claims that the government is 'ethnically cleansing' Afrikaner culture.

South African author J. M. Coetzee won the 2003 Nobel Prize for Literature. In 1983 Coetzee took the Booker Prize with *The Life and Times of Michael K* and in 1999 with *Disgrace*, but his novel *Elizabeth Costello* was left off the Booker shortlist days before the Nobel announcement on 2 October 2003.

## **Swaziland**

Elections were held (18 October 2003). The Democratic Alliance of banned political parties, trade unions and human rights groups boycotted the poll, calling it a bogus exercise. They wanted a constitutional monarchy to replace rule by royal fiat.

The Commonwealth sent an expert team of five led by David Thompson, former finance minister of Barbados, but, as its report pointed out, 'the credibility of these National Elections was not an issue: no elections can be credible when they are for a Parliament which does not have power and when political parties are banned'. The team could only recommend electoral arrangements that it hoped 'one day will be an invaluable asset to a genuinely democratic Swaziland'.

The report proposed a new constitution providing for power to be held by parliament and government, the existence of political parties and respect for the rule of law; a complete re-registration; and a programme of Commonwealth technical help to assist in this process.

Just before the poll King Mswati III picked from thousands of women, in the traditional custom, his 11th wife, Nomonde Fihla.

## **Botswana**

Work began in mid-2003 to build an eight-foot, 300-mile electric fence on the border with Zimbabwe to stop people and livestock coming across. Zimbabweans called it a southern African version of the Israeli security wall. Botswana said it was a legitimate response to the threat from diseased cattle and unemployed people who had been coming across illegally since life worsened in Zimbabwe in 2000. More than 60 000 Zimbabweans had entered Botswana and 2000 were being repatriated each month. Locals blamed the Zimbabweans for robberies and burglaries.

Under a transformation of the public service all senior public servants will sign by 1 April 2004 performance agreements, binding them to deliver predetermined goals and objectives. At a Commonwealth seminar (20–24 October) 60 permanent and deputy permanent secretaries discussed progress. The Commonwealth aim is to make performance agreements in due course a common feature in most Commonwealth countries.

The Vice-President, Lt-Gen Ian Khama, became chairman of the ruling Botswana Democratic Party, replacing Ponatshego Kedikilwe in a 512 to 219 vote. Khama's father was Botswana's first president, Sir Seretse Khama.

## **Nigeria**

In a bid to help the fight against the wholesale plundering of oil, the USA gave Nigeria three refitted World War Two patrol boats with four more to follow. Criminal gangs were now taking so much oil from the pipelines that they were using tankers to carry it away. A tanker load of oil was said to disappear every week. The Nigerian navy intercepted a Russian-registered tanker with 11 300 tonnes of allegedly stolen oil and in the first nine months of 2003 15 vessels had been seized. It was believed 15 per cent of the country's oil output was being lost.

Rising oil prices continued to cause labour unrest with threats in October of general strikes. Rilwanu Lukman, key oil adviser to President Olusegun Obasanjo, resigned suddenly (8 October 2003). Debate raged about the urgent need for removal of fuel subsidies, as a first step towards privatization and rehabilitation of the outdated refineries, but this would involve more price rises. Obasanjo announced plans that would aim to make available information about financial flows in oil and mining sectors. Audits of the state Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation would be published.

An outbreak of polio in Nigeria spread to neighbouring countries where the disease had been eliminated and threatened the World Health Organisation (WHO) goal to eradicate it from the globe. To halt the spread 15 million children in Nigeria and four other west and central African states were immunized in a three-day emergency campaign in mid-October. The drive was hindered when Muslim fundamentalists in Kano, Kaduna and Zamfara said vaccines were part of an American conspiracy to spread HIV-AIDS.

By four votes to one an appeals court overturned the conviction and sentence to be stoned to death of Amin Lawal for having a child out of wedlock (25 September). Mrs Lawal would have been the first person to be stoned to death since Sharia was introduced in northern Nigeria in 1999. The reprieve followed months of international pressure to save her, but stoning sentences were still being passed in the region.

Nigeria said a proposal in Congress to cut aid unless it handed over former Liberian president Charles Taylor had strained Nigerian relations with Washington. Taylor, in exile in Nigeria, is indicted for war crimes in Sierra Leone.

Switzerland said (19 August) it would cooperate in efforts to recover funds stolen from Nigeria by former dictator Sani Abacha. But after three years Britain had yet to hand over key documents on £3 billion in British banks believed to have been looted by Abacha, saying it needed further clarification on technical issues. A letter from lawyers acting for Nigeria sent to British Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown (9 October) threatened legal action.

The Netherlands signed a £1 billion debt rescheduling agreement (17 October)—the 12th such deal with a member of the Paris Club, to which Nigeria owes about £15 billion.

## **Cameroon**

President Paul Biya set up a Cameroon/Commonwealth Commission that would help the country fulfil more effectively its obligations under the Harare Declaration. Cameroon has come under repeated criticism for not carrying through changes it pledged to make when it was admitted to the Commonwealth after some delay in 1995. The Commonwealth Secretary-General sent Christine Stewart, former Canadian foreign affairs secretary of state, as his special envoy to discuss reforms on election management, human rights, the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary and decentralization. Cameroon presented its agenda at a meeting in London (31 October) attended by representatives from seven countries (including Germany and Italy), the UN, EU, La Francophonie and several NGOs. Financial and technical support was sought.

## **Sierra Leone**

The UN Security Council extended the peacekeeping mandate of the UN mission (19 September 2003) for another six months from 30 September. Joseph Momoh, president from 1985 until he was ousted by military coup in 1992, died in Guinea (2 August 2003) aged 63. He was sentenced to ten years jail for conspiring in the May 1997 coup and pardoned in 1999.

## **Ghana**

The government approved a £873 million takeover of Ashanti Goldfields by AngloGold, the gold mining unit of Anglo-American. It was the end of a long takeover battle with Randgold. Although the Ghanaian government holds only a 17 per cent stake in Ashanti, it retains a 'golden share' that can block any deal. The deal made AngloGold the world's leading gold producer.

Following the exiling of President Charles Taylor in Nigeria, an accord was signed in Accra (18 August) by government and rebel forces ending four years of war in Liberia. It set up an interim caretaker government to run the country until January 2006. Retired general Abdulsalami Abubakar of Nigeria had been the chief ceasefire mediator. UN, EU and African Union representatives witnessed the signing.

## **Kenya**

A committee set up by the new government of President Mwai Kibaki found substantial evidence of 'corruption, unethical conduct and other forms of misbehaviour' among five of the nine appeal court judges, 18 of 36 high court judges and 82 of 254 magistrates. Chairman Aaron Ringera told Chief Justice Evans Gicheru the committee was presenting him with 'a dragon'. He added: 'It is bound to snort, jump, kick and even attack, for corruption always fights back. Your lordship will have no option but to seize it by the horns and slay it.' Under Kenyan law the Chief Justice must ask the president to appoint a tribunal for each of the 23 judges under suspicion. Kibaki suspended 23 appeal court and high court judges (16 October 2003)—over half Kenya's top judges.

Justice and Constitutional Affairs Minister Kiraitu Murungi said (15 October) that a Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission would be set up after findings from a Task force led by Human Rights Commission chairman Professor Makau Mutua had been studied. He said: 'We want to diagnose the disease that has ailed Kenya for the last 40 years...the Government cannot afford to renege on its promises'.

Professor Yash Ghai, who had been drafting the new constitution said (17 November) he would resign unless the government let him finish the process. Kibaki promised constitutional change in his election, but the coalition government was now split.

Vice-President Michael Wamalwa, who had been central to the opposition victory in the 2002 election, died in a London hospital aged 58 (23 August 2003). He had been a popular figure and was in line to succeed Kibaki, who said that as a man in his seventies he would stand for only one term.

A bill before parliament aimed to end discrimination against sufferers of

HIV/AIDS. It would be a criminal offence to sack or deny work to any sufferer and would stop schools refusing students with the virus.

In talks in South Africa President Thabo Mbeki offered Kibaki equipment, training and information to help Kenya fight terrorism.

The longstanding allegations that 600 Masai and Samburu women in northern Kenya were raped by British soldiers on training resurfaced when a British lawyer won £45 million compensation for nomadic herdsman injured by unexploded ordnance the Army was said to have left on firing ranges. The incidents stretched back to 1983. A group of the women holding their mixed-race children demonstrated outside the British High Commission in Nairobi (14 August). British military police forensic experts believed many claims were false and that local police reports had been forged, but some cases seemed genuine and were to be further investigated with the help of the Kenyan government.

The ban on the Mau Mau movement imposed by the British in 1950 was lifted (31 August). The movement claims compensation from the UK for mistreatment of its members. The ban became obsolete at independence in 1963 but was never formally repealed.

## **Tanzania**

A second Commonwealth–Tanzania Investment conference was held in Dar es Salaam (28–30 May 2003). More than 300 delegates, including government ministers, executives of local companies and foreign direct investors, discussed new opportunities for private sector involvement in Tanzania and the region. Co-organizer was the Commonwealth Business Council, whose director Mohan Kaul pointed to Tanzania's great progress in economic growth and stability. Tanzania became president of the Southern African Development Community at the end of 2003.

## **Uganda**

Vice-President Gilbert Bukenya presented to the constitutional review commission in September 2003 cabinet proposals under which the ruling Movement sought to lift the two-term limit for a serving president. If approved in a national referendum, President Yoweri Museveni, who has been in power since 1986, could stand in the 2006 elections.

A new opposition radio station, called Radio Rhino International-Africa, began broadcasting shortwave from Germany. It carried a message from Milton Obote, the first president, who is 79 and lives in exile in Zambia, accusing Museveni of dictatorship, massacres and interfering in neighbouring countries. Obote has little support in Uganda, but the party he led, Uganda People's Congress, retains a following in the northern regions.

Museveni said (6 October) that, because he did not trust his country's doctors, he and his family had to go abroad for medical treatment. The *Monitor* newspaper had criticized his use of the presidential jet to fly one of his daughters to Germany to give birth.

Solomon Iguru, King of Bunyoro, renewed a claim he first made in 2001 for £2.8 billion compensation for 'acts of pillage, rape and murder' committed by soldiers commanded by Colonel Henry Colville against the kingdom of his grandfather Kabalega when Bunyoro was annexed in 1894. Kabalega was jailed

without trial in Seychelles for 22 years. King Iguru had collected data for his case from the Public Records Office in London, Rhodes House and the Churchill Archives in Cambridge.

British, Norwegian, Swedish and US investigations stretching over a long period were being made into allegations that included the offer of inducements to Ugandan MPs to ensure that the World Bank-financed Bujagali dam on the river Nile went ahead. The project is the largest private finance project in east Africa and one of the Bank's most important in the continent. The Bank had suspended its £150 million backing and two companies pulled out. The Uganda government was pressing on with the dam, which would bring electricity to millions of homes.

### **Mozambique**

A 15-year concession to run Maputo port was given in April 2003 to a company controlled by investors from Sweden, Portugal and the UK—the first privatization of an entire port authority in Africa. The aim is to attract trade away from congested Durban, using a new motorway that now links Johannesburg and Maputo. In the days when it was called Laurenço Marques Maputo handled 40 per cent of exports from Johannesburg and the Transvaal.

### **Mauritius**

Sir Anerood Jugnauth resigned as prime minister (30 September 2003) and took over as president from Karl Auguste Offman. Jugnauth, who held the post from 1982 to 1995 and then again since 2000, was leader of the Mauritius Socialist Movement (MSM). The new prime minister is his former deputy Paul Berenger and leader of the coalition partner, the Mauritian Militant Movement (MMM). Berenger was also finance minister and in his last budget (9 June) he forecast a deficit of 5.5 per cent of GDP, which would grow by 6 per cent in 2003–04. Inflation would be 5 per cent.

### **British Indian Ocean Territory**

Chagossians, the evicted islanders of Diego Garcia, lost their claim for compensation in the High Court in London (9 October 2003). Judge Duncan Ouseley said some islanders could claim to have been treated shamelessly by successive British governments, but it would be a waste of public money to continue the case. Britain moved 2000 islanders out between 1967 and 1973 to make way for a US base. Most went to Mauritius, some to Seychelles. In 2000 the islanders won a court victory over the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that meant they could go back to parts of the peninsula. But this did not happen because it was said the cost of building infrastructure would be prohibitive. In his long judgement Judge Ouseley said many Chagossians 'alone were made to pay a personal price for the defence establishment on Diego Garcia'.

### **Zambia**

Former President Frederick Chiluba was arrested (5 August 2003) and accused with former intelligence chief Xavier Chunga of stealing £18.5 million of state

funds in his ten years in office (1991 to 2001). He denied the charges and was freed on bail. The Zambian government said it had seized properties in South Africa, the UK, USA, Panama and the Bahamas. President Levy Mwanawasa told journalists (2 October) Chiluba must return 95 per cent of the money if he wanted him to exercise his constitutional right to pardon him.

A motion to impeach Mwanawasa supported by some senior members of his own Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) was defeated 95 to 57 in the National Assembly (13 August). The motion accused him of failing to uphold democratic values or promote good governance, nepotism, tribalism and corrupt practices. Impeachment requires a two-thirds vote.

Defence Minister Michael Mabenga lost his job and parliamentary seat when the Supreme Court annulled his election victory. The judges said he had broken the law by using government money and vehicles while campaigning in the 2001 elections. A second MP of the ruling MMD similarly lost his seat, but the party retained a three-seat majority. It had won three of the last four by-elections, but with four by-elections again pending it was far from safe.

Illegal commercial poaching has cut the numbers of elephants in Zambia to 25 000 from 200 000 in 1972. In Luangwa game park the figure is down from 35 000 to 5000. Ten black rhinos were to be imported from Zimbabwe to help to reintroduce the species, which was wiped out in the 1970s. Only 3100 black rhinos are believed to survive world-wide.

## **Pakistan**

A major operation in the hunt for al-Qaida and Taliban fighters in the mountainous region along the borders with Afghanistan was launched (4 September 2003). It continued for some weeks and in a helicopter gunship raid (2 October) on hideouts 12 al-Qaida and Taliban fighters were killed. Pakistan said the operation showed its commitment to hunt down terrorists, but US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage told Congress he did not think it extended 'up and down the rank and file of the Pakistani security forces'. Two Arab satellite TV channels broadcast an audiotape (29 September) said to be from Osama bin Laden's Number Two calling on Pakistanis to overthrow President Pervez Musharraf for helping the USA and 'betraying' Islam.

Over several months Washington pressed Pakistan to contribute troops to coalition forces in Iraq. At the UN General Assembly in September Musharraf said he could help in a 'UN-sanctioned Arab and Islamic effort', but would not send troops. President Bush did not even mention the matter when he met Musharraf.

Sixty people died in a remote part of north Pakistan when explosives being used for building blew up (3 August).

Gunmen shot dead Maulana Azam Tariq, an extremist Sunni Muslim leader of an outlawed militant group who had won a seat in Parliament in 2002 from behind bars. He was released when a court ruled there was not enough evidence to hold him. He formed a new party and joined the ruling coalition of Prime Minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali.

*Frontier Post* sub-editor Munawar Mohsin was jailed for life in Peshawar (9 July) for blasphemy. He was held responsible for publishing a letter headed 'Why Muslims hate Jews'. The day after publication a crowd attacked the *Post*

offices. It was the first time a journalist had been convicted for blasphemy in North West Frontier Province.

Nasim Bibi, 45, in jail in Lahore for a year awaiting trial for blasphemy, died (24 August). Her lawyer said she had been tortured and beaten by fellow prisoners.

A Swiss magistrate found former prime minister Benazir Bhutto and her husband, still in jail in Pakistan, guilty of money laundering (5 August). They were ordered to pay £6.8 million held in Swiss banks in reparations to the Pakistani state. They denied the charges. Another Swiss magistrate fined the couple for arranging a £7.4 million bribe. Pakistan said returned monies would be distributed to flood victims, but appeals could drag on for years.

A Pakistan human rights group said 600 women were killed in Pakistan by their families in 'honour killings' between January and August. Most were punished for alleged adultery.

All Pakistanis over 18 who did not acquire a new, tamper-proof national identity card by December faced being disenfranchised, and losing their passports, land ownership papers and driving licences.

## **India**

Protracted US attempts in July 2003 to persuade India to send 17 000 peace-keeping troops to Iraq were politely rebuffed. Washington stepped up the pressure but without success. India insisted on a UN mandate.

After hesitating since the early 1980s, India finally agreed (3 September) to buy 66 Hawk jet trainers from British Aerospace as part of a £1.1 billion deal, which would at the outset bring Indian air force pilots to train in the UK. The first 24 jets would be made in the UK and the rest built under licence in India.

Ariel Sharon visited New Delhi (8 September) with a 150-strong delegation—the first Israeli Prime Minister to visit the subcontinent. When the USA, UK and others curbed technology exports to India after its nuclear tests in 1998 Israel stepped up arms sales. Now Israel was replacing Russia as India's biggest arms supplier. One result of the Sharon visit was a deal to buy the Israeli-made Phalcon early warning radar system, which would enable planes to see deep into Pakistan while still in Indian airspace. The two countries first established diplomatic relations in 1992. India was the first non-Arab nation to recognize Palestine's independence and New Delhi said its support for the Palestinian movement remained as firm as ever.

India agreed to set up a free trade area with members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) by 2012 at its October summit in Bali.

The Supreme Court ordered (18 September) the federal investigation agency to act against Behenji Mayawati, who had resigned as Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh following allegations of kickbacks to build a shopping mall within view of the Taj Mahal. The ruling BJP had been in uneasy coalition with lower-caste Mayawati and was now forced to withdraw its support, an embarrassing setback in India's most populous state. The Taj project was put on hold in June.

A 42-member team from the Lutyens Trust visited Delhi in October to discuss government plans to redevelop a residential neighbourhood and build a complex that would house the defence ministry and a new foreign ministry close to the Lutyens-designed national archives. Some demolition (though not of Lutyens buildings) would be involved. Indian architects and urban historians

called for laws to protect the city centre. The capital was inaugurated in 1931 and Lutyens' 6920-acre New Delhi now lies within a congested urban sprawl. The city population has grown from 200 000 at independence in 1947 to 14 million.

The Archaeological Society of India reported (25 August) on its investigation into the history of the Ayodhya mosque demolished in 1992. It had found features, including the bases of 50 pillars, showing that a massive temple-like structure had existed dating back to the 11th or 10th century. Hindu nationalists had claimed the mosque was built on the site of an earlier Hindu temple at the birthplace of the god Rama. The findings differed from an interim report in June, which said nothing like a Hindu temple had been found. Charges against Deputy Prime Minister Advani arising from the 1992 demolition were dropped (19 September) because of conflicting evidence, but those against seven others, including another minister, were to proceed.

Two bombs in taxis killed 52 people and injured 140 in central Mumbai (25 August 2003). One explosion was near the gold market, a district where Muslims and Hindus live side by side. The second was between the Gateway of India and the Taj Mahal hotel. Police held 23 people, including several women. They said those arrested included a new breed of Muslim business and professional people ideologically driven and with no criminal record.

The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), an NGO, said (5 August) that tests showed Pepsi-Cola's soft drink products contained 36 times the level of pesticide residues permitted under European Union regulations and Coca-Cola had 30 times the level. It said tests of the same products in the USA had found no residues. At a joint press conference both companies vehemently denied the allegations. Bottles of all 12 drinks made by the companies were removed from the Indian parliament and the government ordered an investigation. Sales fell by up to 50 per cent all over the country. Pepsi asked the high court to suppress the CSE report and a judge ordered an independent investigation. The issue brought together parties of all persuasions and in Mumbai activists of the ruling BJP smashed bottles and jumped on posters. The uproar ended (21 August) when Health Minister Sushma Swaraj said government tests showed the drinks were safe and complied with Indian standards. None of the 12 samples had the level of pesticide residues alleged in the report. The CSE said Indian water regulations were almost non-existent. The struggle for clean water in India continued with the government set to adopt EU standards for packaged water from January 2004. There were no clear winners of the argument and parliament said it would not lift its Pepsi ban.

Trade between India and China was showing a marked rise—in two years it had doubled, reaching towards £4.6 billion in 2003. Fifteen IT companies had set up in China and IT exports were three times those from China.

On Independence Day (15 August) India announced a £47 million mission to send an unmanned spacecraft to the moon by 2008. It will examine the moon with gamma-ray spectrometers and produce a high-resolution digital map of the surface.

Septuagenarian Defence Minister George Fernandes flew in a Mig-21 jet (1 August) to refute charges that the Indian fleet of Russian fighters had become 'flying coffins'. In ten years 100 Indian Migs had crashed, killing 80 pilots.

A drive began in October to remove the 40 000 cows which wander the streets of New Delhi and cause traffic congestion. One hundred workers helped

police with lorries, ropes and prods to round up the cattle and take them to sanctuaries sponsored by animal rights groups. A bill to ban cow slaughter was blocked in parliament (21 August) by the opposition parties. Almost all states except West Bengal and small states in the northeast already ban slaughter and the bill aimed to exploit differences in the Congress Party.

A government review proposed to cut the number of public holidays. In 2002 the country's 20 million public sector workers were all entitled to 21 days' paid leave.

In a stampede at a Hindu festival in Nasik, Maharashtra (27 August) 39 people died and 150 were injured. It happened when pilgrims took a ritual bath in the river Godavari on the most auspicious day of the 43-day event.

Major British companies were opening call centres in India so as to save staff costs at home. BT were pioneers in this outsourcing, but now Reuters went a step further by planning to shift most of its core financial data business to India. It aimed to cut 3000 jobs over three years. British railways planned to shift inquiry services to Bangalore. So did Prudential Insurance. HSBC cut 4000 jobs in the UK to relocate work to India as well as Malaysia and China, and Lloyds TSB cut 1000 jobs to do likewise. US investment banks such as JP Morgan and Chase were also beginning to move analysts' jobs to India.

From 8 August Indian income taxpayers were able to file their return electronically for the first time. The tax form for salaried workers became a single page downloadable from the internet. Tax collection and tax refunds were being outsourced to agencies in the private sector. Only 30 million Indians pay taxes, but it is estimated 100 million should be doing so.

Thirteen men were convicted (15 September) of killing Australian Christian missionary Graham Staines and his two sons in Orissa four years ago. The ringleader was a leading member of the youth wing of the rightwing World Council of Hindu Churches, which is allied to the ruling BJP.

The Prince of Wales visited India for nine days at the end of October, spending much of his time in Delhi, Mumbai, Jaipur and Jodhpur looking at environmental developments, building restoration and youth projects. A restored fort he visited is one of several the royal families of India are trying to take back from the government. On his last days the Prince paid an extensive visit to what is said to be Asia's largest slum—Dharavi in Mumbai.

Up to mid-September India recorded 41 inches of rain—the second highest in 100 years. Overall around 1500 people had been killed in South Asia. The monsoon rains boosted the economy as foreign venture capital flows to India leapt and shares rose.

The cabinet approved 74 per cent private investment in the country's two largest airports—Mumbai and New Delhi (11 September) and said Chennai, Bangalore and Calcutta would follow.

More than 55 years ago a team of scholars at Deccan College in Pune began compiling a comprehensive dictionary of Sanskrit—one of India's 18 official languages. In 2003 they were only halfway through the first letter. Entries for some words run to five pages—and the Sanskrit alphabet has 43 letters. Twenty scholars on the project have retired and the project is short of funds, with 34 posts unfilled. Political pressure to finish the dictionary was growing.

India and Bangladesh announced a study part-funded by UNESCO to investigate the breeding and feeding habits of the Bengal tiger in the Sunderbans, one of the last natural habitats for tigers and a natural heritage site.

Kerala became the first Indian state to set employment guidelines for elephants, whether carting goods or taking part in Hindu festivals. They would retire at 65 (they live to 80), earn £70–£340 a day and walk no further than 19 miles a day.

### **India and Pakistan**

Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee called for an end to violence and bloodshed between India and Pakistan in a statement read out by an Indian MP at a conference in Islamabad (10 August 2003). The MP was one of 32 and as many journalists who travelled by bus from New Delhi following the resumption of the Delhi–Lahore service. Pakistani and Indian politicians hugged each other as rose petals showered on them. Vajpayee's message said: 'We can live together only if we let each other live'. As the conference opened the two countries resumed full diplomatic relations after a 20-month break. Pakistanis were disappointed Vajpayee would not agree to a summit with President Musharraf before further progress was made on alleged terrorism in Kashmir. He agreed to visit Islamabad in January 2004 for a meeting of South Asian leaders.

In an address to the MPs over tea at his residence at the end of their visit Musharraf offered an immediate ceasefire along the Kashmir line of control. He said: 'I could give the orders today'. Indian reaction was cool: there could be no ceasefire until Islamabad ended its support for 'cross-border terrorism'. But in his Independence Day address (15 August) at the Red Fort Vajpayee emphasized again the need for peace and referred to an incident involving a Pakistani girl who had travelled to Bangalore for an operation. Indians had poured on to the streets to pray for her and businessmen had paid into a fund in her honour to treat other Pakistani children. The hospital waived its fees for heart surgery.

The warming of relationships was set back a few days later with the bomb explosions in Mumbai. Pakistani denunciation of the attack was dismissed as 'mere formality' and Deputy Prime Minister L. K. Advani demanded that Islamabad hand over 19 militant suspects to show its commitment to fighting cross-border terrorism.

Following the Mumbai attacks violence flared again in Kashmir, with 30 Indian soldiers and separatist militants killed in a week, and increased shelling across the Line of Control.

In his speech to the UN General Assembly (24 September) Musharraf called for the UN to play a bigger role in monitoring infiltration across the Line. He expressed frustration at Indian insistence that Pakistan should crack down on cross-border terrorism. Next day Vajpayee repeated at the UN that talks could not begin until terrorism ceased. India claimed (30 September) it had killed 15 Islamic militants in a battle with 1600 trying to sneak in from Pakistan.

India proposed (22 October) to send Advani to revive the peace process by talking to Kashmiri separatists and opening border crossings, including one in Kashmir itself. Twelve proposals included resuming test match cricket, a bus service across divided parts of Kashmir, expansion of high commissions, and easing visa travel restrictions across the international border. Pakistan reacted coolly and accused India of a public relations exercise, but a team of Pakistani civil servants travelled to Kashmir to inspect a hydroelectric project—the first such trip in many years.

Pakistan fired a 290-km range ballistic missile in the first of a new series of tests (3 October).

## **Bangladesh**

Village communication is leapfrogging from mail ponies to cellphones in parts of the country. Under a Grameen Bank programme the country would have a million customers by the end of 2003. Cheap phones are registered in the names of village women, but also operated by their husbands and children and shared out in the village at a few taka a call. With a single phone the service becomes a family business earning over £100 a month. Bangladesh has only three landlines per 1000 people—one of the world's lowest figures.

Two leaders of the opposition Awami League were assassinated at the end of August, one in Khulna and the other in Dhaka. Party leader Sheikh Hasina blamed the government, although a banned Maoist group had claimed responsibility. She also said the government had killed 24 000 party members since taking power in October 2001. A report from the Bureau of Human Rights Bangladesh (29 September) said 2974 people had been killed in violent incidents across the country in the first nine months of 2003.

The High Court quashed a corruption case against Prime Minister Begun Khaleda Zia and seven others (11 September). The case, filed during the Awami League administration, was that Zia had profited from the purchase of two Airbus airlines, with loss of public money.

Bangladesh was named in Transparency International's annual survey as the world's most corrupt country (7 October). Finland was the least corrupt. Two other Commonwealth countries were in the top ten—Nigeria and Cameroon.

## **Sri Lanka**

President Chandrika Kumaratunga suspended parliament, sacked the defence, interior and media ministers and put the army on to the streets of Colombo (4 November) to guard key locations. A day later she declared a state of emergency. Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe was in Washington trying to win support for his efforts to end the civil war with the Tamil Tigers. He appealed to the army to stay calm, saying the 20-month peace process had been put in jeopardy. He called the president's action 'irresponsible and precipitous'. Three days earlier the Tigers had put forward a plan for power sharing, having dropped their demand for independence. Kumaratunga said the plan would break up the country.

President George Bush put his support behind Wickremasinghe, and British Prime Minister Tony Blair and other world leaders urged all sides to work for a negotiated settlement. The Sri Lankan cabinet called the president's actions a 'gross abuse of presidential power'. When the Prime Minister returned to Colombo the President lifted the state of emergency. He rejected an offer to join her in a coalition government. The two are traditional political enemies. As leaders of the two main political parties they 'co-habit' under the French-style constitution.

## **Maldives**

The most serious anti-government riots in memory (19–21 September 2003) followed a prison disturbance in which four people died. Seven prisoners and 25 police and security officers were flown to Sri Lanka for treatment. Police stations, the high court and other buildings were set on fire in Male, the capital, and President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom appealed on TV for calm. His charge that the prisoners had been trying to break into the prison armoury led to a second riot. Security officers opened fire and prisoners were chained in their cells and kept without food. Gayoom removed Brigadier Adam Zahir, deputy chief of staff of the security service and commissioner of police.

Two days later parliament backed Gayoom for a sixth term in office. The ballot, with three other candidates, was secret.

The Maldives has no political parties. In a referendum (17 October) Gayoom won 90 per cent of the vote on a 77 per cent turnout. On taking the oath for his new term he promised to reform the judiciary, the executive and parliament's powers and set up a human rights commission. A day later Gayoom sacked his attorney-general and a minister. They were said to be backing reformists trying to register a political party. Gayoom has been in power for 25 years and is credited with transforming the economy, with 10 per cent growth for 20 years. Tourism is the money-spinner in the country of 1190 coral islands and any local unrest could affect the industry.

## **Malaysia**

At 77 Mahathir Mohamad stepped down (31 October 2003) after 22 years as prime minister. He clocked out symbolically, using the punch card system he introduced for civil servants. Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi, 63, took over—Malaysia's fifth prime minister since independence in 1957.

Mahathir went out in typically robust style. He told the 57-nation Organisation of the Islamic Conference in Kuala Lumpur (16 October) that Islam had reached a low point while Jews ruled the world. He said Israel was 'the enemy allied with powerful nations', adding 'The Europeans killed six million Jews out of 12 million. But today the Jews rule this world by proxy. They get others to fight and die for them'. He added: '1.3 billion Muslims cannot be defeated by a few million Jews'. But Mahathir was also highly critical of the Muslims, saying they should use their brains and not suicide bombings and blaming Islamic clerics for stalling economic progress by teaching that science and technology were un-Islamic and that only theology mattered. The conference gave Mahathir a standing ovation.

Many countries strongly condemned the remarks. The UK and Germany summoned Malaysian diplomats to complain formally. The USA talked of contempt for the remarks. Mahathir refused to apologize and Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar said they had been taken out of context. The US Senate tied £700 000 in military aid to religious freedom in Malaysia (28 October). Mahathir said Malaysia did not need the money and the USA was trying to run the world.

At the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Bangkok four days later Mahathir called for developing countries to set a new agenda for future world trade talks. He called the impasse at the World Trade Organization

(WTO) talks in Cancun in September 'a minor success'. The WTO was trying to impose a new era of neocolonialism on poor countries.

In a clash with Australian Prime Minister John Howard, Mahathir said: 'We had a very good history of treating our aborigines. We didn't shoot them dead. We didn't commit genocide.' Howard said: 'It's better that I let him recede gently into retirement'.

Before retiring, Mahathir, as acting Finance Minister, presented his last budget (13 September). He estimated growth at 5.5 to 6 per cent in 2004, but pledged to cut the high budget deficit, returning to a balanced budget in 2006. He raised taxes on liquor and tobacco and, to protect local carmakers, imposed excise taxes on imported cars.

Even on his last day Mahathir continued to rail at the USA and the Jews. But his achievements have been many and he left Malaysia the world's 18th largest trading state, with per capita income tripled to £2600 a year, and the poverty rate down from 35 per cent to 5 per cent.

The opposition Keadilan and Parti Rakyat Malaysia merged (3 August) as the Parti Keadilan Rakyat Malaysia. The new party would be led by Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, wife of imprisoned former deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim.

On a one-day visit, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a £535 million deal with Malaysia for 18 Sukhoi strike aircraft.

A request from exiled former Communist Party leader Chin Peng to return to Malaysia was refused (29 September). Chin, now 81, lives in Thailand.

Abdul Hamid Othman, the government's most senior religious adviser, upheld an Islamic court ruling that Muslim men could now divorce their wives by mobile phone text message—updating the ancient Sharia practice of letting men end a marriage by repeating 'I divorce thee' three times.

## **Singapore**

Lee Kuan Yew, who retired as prime minister in 1990, said on his 80th birthday (16 September 2003) that he would stay in government as Senior Minister for 'as long as I am useful—that depends on my DNA, my doctors and the value of my data bank'. In August Goh Chok Tong said he would hand over as prime minister to Lee's son, Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, when the economy had recovered from the downturn caused by the SARS outbreak.

As the country celebrated 38 years of independence a Remaking Singapore Committee was set up to 'inject more vitality into the social, cultural and political life of the country'.

Big changes in the state-run pension scheme (28 August) meant total contributions would drop from 36 per cent to 33 per cent. Singapore was suffering the worst quarterly decline in GDP since independence. After a 2 per cent contraction in 2002 it was heading for only 1 per cent growth in 2003. And unemployment headed for 5.5 per cent—the highest since the 1980s.

Singapore and Thailand pledged (6 October) to help speed regional integration by new bilateral economic integration. They would open up logistics, banking and telecommunication sectors to each other. The two prime ministers told the ASEAN annual meeting they wanted to 'tango first' and then persuade others to take the floor.

Following a brief visit by President Bush (22 October) Singapore agreed to make its first military contribution to Iraq—soldiers, a transport aircraft and

Landing Ship Tank. The USA also planned to set up an 'advance warning station' in Singapore to detect Asian-originated infectious diseases and bioterrorism threats.

### **Hong Kong**

Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa postponed indefinitely introduction of his controversial anti-subversion law. He recognized the public was uneasy about the law—a fact demonstrated in July when half a million people took to the streets. For the first time Tung met (5 September 2003) his foremost critic, Democratic Party leader Martin Lee, and admitted he had failed to win the people over. President Hu Jintao of China told Hong Kong businessmen in Beijing to give Tung their all-out support.

Support ebbed for a plan to let Hong Kong banks do business in renminbi alongside the Hong Kong dollar. It had been hoped that the territory could become an offshore renminbi centre, but fears grew that the HK dollar could be undermined and that illegal 'hot money' could flow in and out of China.

### **Papua New Guinea**

Canberra officials discussed in Port Moresby in October 2003 plans for greater Australian involvement in tackling the country's economic and social problems. They included representatives of the police, foreign affairs, immigration and attorney-general's departments. The talks followed meetings between Foreign Minister Alexander Downer and Papua New Guinea Foreign Minister Sir Rabbie Namaliu, who agreed to close engagement with the IMF and World Bank and to limit the defence force to 2000. Two hundred police would be deployed in PNG. Australia had long been concerned that corruption and lawlessness were undermining its aid programme. Prime Minister John Howard said he wanted a bigger say in how aid money was spent. PNG Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare said he was insulted by the terms of a letter from Howard.

Downer said the steps did not represent an era where Australia was becoming more aggressive or postcolonialist; they represented an era of heightened Australian engagement. PNG had apparently now dropped its long-standing opposition to Australian intervention in the region, although Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare said he would not agree to Australia overseeing his country's government spending.

The Chief Ombudsman referred to the Supreme Court the election by legislators (18 September) of Sir Albert Kipalan as the next Governor-General. He said he had found possible irregularities. Sir Albert beat his rival Sir Paulias Matane by one vote.

The government agreed (10 July) to contribute 40 police and 44 defence force personnel to the Australian-led intervention force in the Solomon Islands

### **Solomon Islands**

Within a month of its arrival the Australian-led mission to end five years of violence in the islands was proving successful. Harold Keke, the warlord in Guadalcanal responsible for many deaths, surrendered (13 August 2003) and 3850 weapons were handed in. He said six Anglican missionaries held hostage

were now dead. Keke was charged with murdering a Solomons government minister in 2002 and three of his commanders with killing the missionaries. Thousands of islanders took part in a peace march marking the end of the amnesty. John Howard became the first Australian prime minister to visit the country for a decade (25 August 2003). Nick Warner, the diplomat heading the force, said the more dangerous phase lay ahead as weapons not handed in were sought. Only 99 had been given in by the Malaita Eagle Force, which staged the 2000 coup.

## Niue

The first and only political party, the Niue People's Party, was dissolved because of infighting and the failure of projects. It won the 1999 general election, but split in the 2002 poll.

## Tuvalu

A month's parliamentary deadlock over failure to elect a Speaker had followed by-elections in early 2003. The Governor-General convened a special session, as requested by the Opposition, which claimed Prime Minister Saufatu Sopoanga had delayed convening parliament for fear of a no-confidence vote after the by-elections. Sopoanga said (25 August) he felt he had enough support to defeat the vote and would re-convene parliament.

Former prime minister Faimalaga Luka was sworn in as Governor-General, replacing Sir Tomasi Puapua (9 September 2003).

## Tonga

The Legislative Assembly passed a bill barring foreign ownership of the media. The bill was aimed at *The Times of Tonga*. Assembly chairman Prince Tu'ipelehake opposed constitutional amendments planned to increase government control of the media. He said it would bring the country into disrepute.

## Fiji Islands

Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase joined the descendants of English Wesleyan missionary Thomas Baker at ceremonies in November 2003 during which the residents of a village apologized for killing, cooking and eating Baker 136 years ago. No one knows exactly why this act of cannibalism on 21 July 1867 took place. The villagers of Nabutautau, on the main island, Viti Levu, say they have suffered bad luck ever since. Baker's great-great-grandson was overwhelmed by the welcome he was given. Eight Fijian followers were clubbed to death with Baker, who came from Sussex. Contemporary accounts said 'We ate everything but his boots'. One boot is in the national museum. Cannibalism died out in Fiji in the mid-19th century when Christianity was accepted.

In the long-running dispute over the composition of the Cabinet Qarase said (18 September) he was referring back to the Supreme Court the question of how many posts the Labour Party was entitled to hold. Qarase offered 14, but Labour leader Mahendra Chaudhry continued to demand 17.

Sir Leonard Usher, a New Zealander who became one of Fiji's most distinguished citizens, headmaster, mayor of Suva, and long-serving editor-in-chief of *The Fiji Times*, died (30 August 2003) aged 96. At his funeral the eulogy was given by the chairman of the Great Council of Chiefs, Ratu Epeli Ganilau.

### **Nauru**

Political turmoil continued to plague the republic. In August 2003 three MPs defected and President Ludwig Scotty lost a confidence vote in parliament after only two months in office. Rene Harris became president—a post from which he had been ousted only in January.

### **Pitcairn Island**

Richard Fell, UK High Commissioner in New Zealand, who is also Governor of Pitcairn, dismissed the island's commissioner Leon Salt because of alleged obstruction of the prosecutions for child abuse against 13 Pitcairn men. Salt was said to be suing the UK government for wrongful dismissal.

The first birth in Pitcairn for 17 years—Emily Rose Christian—took place on 14 September 2003. It raised the island's population to 48.

### **Australia**

Prime Minister John Howard notched up considerable economic progress for Australia at the end of the year. US President George Bush, on a 20-hour visit to Australia, addressed the Canberra parliament (23 October)—the fourth US president to do so—and set a deadline to complete a bilateral trade deal. A day later Chinese President Hu Jintao became the first non-US leader to address parliament. Hu, who stayed for three days and spoke for longer than Bush, emphasized the 'immense' potential for economic cooperation between China and Australia. Their economies, he pointed out, were complementary. He reminded Australia that China expected support for its reunification with Taiwan—a divisive issue between Washington and Beijing. During Hu's visit a framework agreement was signed for Australia to supply China with up to 100 million tonnes of liquefied natural gas over 25 years—one the world's largest gas deals.

In a cabinet reshuffle Howard appointed Philip Ruddock as Attorney-General in place of Daryl Williams, who moved to Communications, Information Technology and the Arts. Ruddock had been a controversial Immigration Minister at the centre of several storms over his handling of asylum-seekers.

Pauline Hanson and David Ettridge, founders of the One Nation party, were jailed (20 August 2003) for three years for electoral fraud. But after 11 weeks the Queensland Court of Appeal overturned the convictions and they were freed. Hanson won a shock victory in Oxley, Brisbane, in 1996. She wanted health, education and housing aid for Aborigines slashed and a ban on immigration. In the Queensland state elections of 1998 one in four people backed her party. Although her popularity waned, critics said the Howard Liberal government stole her policies, shifted politics to the right and dragged Labor with it. Hanson's jailing led to an upsurge of sympathy for her, with suggestions that

she had become a political detainee. New South Wales Premier Bob Carr, tough critic of her policies, said: 'Is prison the right way to treat an offence of this type? I don't think so.'

Andrew Wilkie, senior transnational issues analyst at the intelligence monitoring base, the Office of National Assessments, told a parliamentary hearing in Canberra that the government had lied and misled the public over Iraq. His main charge, similar to those made against the government in Britain, was that the government had hardened intelligence assessments to stir backing for the war. Prime Minister John Howard said: 'I deny that absolutely'.

In September 2003 100 workers laid the last of a million sleepers of a railway line linking Darwin with Alice Springs and joining the line to Adelaide. It had taken the men 18 months in a harsh climate. For the first time all the country's main cities would be accessible from Perth to Sydney and Adelaide to Darwin. Ninety bridges had to be built. One of the great rail journeys of the world by the Ghan train would take 47 hours. The Ghan—named after the Afghans who came to Australia with their camels—was the first passenger train into the interior from Adelaide 100 years ago. The new line would mainly be used for freight—three million tonnes of it a year.

Research published by a Sydney hospital (11 August) said anorexia was now the third biggest health problem for girls under 18 in Australia and one in 20 women had suffered from it at one point. The average age of sufferers had dropped from 14 to 12 in 18 months.

The federal government planned to ban fishermen from one-third of the Great Barrier Reef. A report from the Queensland government and the country's leading scientific bodies in August said the Reef could lose much of its colour and its reputation as a natural wonder because of coral bleaching caused by rising temperatures, pollution and over-fishing.

Sowing of Australia's first GM food crop was approved when Bayer was given a commercial licence (25 July).

The West Australian government approved in principle the use of Barrow Island, off the north coast, for the development of Australia's largest gas reserve, the Gorgon field.

New research showed cars hitting wildlife, mostly kangaroos, cost insurers £8.5 million a year. One in every 1200 hits an animal each year. Research in Tasmania found that up to 90 per cent of the population of Tasmanian Devils were being killed off by a cancer-forming virus. The dangerous species is protected.

More than 50 000 Australian sheep were stranded in a ship in the Gulf destined for Saudi Arabia. Three countries turned them away saying they were diseased and many died. After 68 days at sea the sheep were returned to Australia for slaughter. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Australia called for the £415 million export trade, at six million sheep and one million cattle the biggest in the world, to be banned. The government ordered an investigation into the live animal export industry.

The skulls of Aboriginals on display at the Manchester Museum for a century were returned to their descendants in a ceremony in Manchester attended by a delegation of elders. They were to be repatriated to their traditional homelands. Museum director Tristram Besterman said: 'We hope to contribute to ending the sense of outrage and dispossession felt by Australian Aborigines today'.

The Victoria state coroner ordered a new inquest into the fate of Harold Holt, the Australian prime minister who vanished aged 59 on a swim in 1967. Under a new law more than 100 cases of suspected drowning where no body was found could be reopened.

### **Pacific Islands Forum**

In a secret ballot at its meeting in Auckland (14–16 August) the 16-nation Forum elected retired Australian diplomat Greg Unwin as its secretary-general. The day before it had failed to agree. Hitherto the post has always been filled by a Pacific islander and Nauru, Samoa and Tonga proposed other candidates. New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark denied Unwin won because of Australian pressure. He succeeds Papua New Guinean Noel Levi.

Prime Minister John Howard took a strong position defending Australia's greater involvement in the region. He called for greater political and economic cooperation among Pacific states and for a pooling of resources. He denied this was a 'neocolonial' vision. A governance code was adopted aimed at cleaner and more transparent government, a requirement for disclosure of fraud, corruption and maladministration, and guidelines to ensure peaceful transfer of power and the prevention of coups.

### **New Zealand**

By ten votes MPs (14 October 2003) created New Zealand's own final court of appeal. The law sets up from July 2004 a five-judge Supreme Court, ending appeals to the Privy Council in London. Attorney-General Margaret Wilson said it was time for New Zealand to stand on its own judicial feet. She added: 'We must throw off once and for all the fetters of our colonial past. The development of New Zealand law has been stifled.'

The government promised (18 August 2003) to go ahead with plans to declare nearly all its 11 680-mile coastline public property. The Maori people had won a legal case saying that their forebears owned the shore and seabed before the Europeans arrived and it remains their property. But Prime Minister Helen Clark insisted that it 'should be public domain, with open access and use for all New Zealanders'. Only areas in private hands would remain outside nationalization.

An earthquake measuring 7.1 on the Richter scale hit the Fjordland national park (22 August), a World Heritage site used for *The Lord of the Rings* films. More than 200 landslides caused serious damage to the area.

In a radio show star broadcaster Paul Holmes several times called UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan 'a cheeky darkie'. His comments were universally condemned. Prime Minister Clark said the remarks were completely unacceptable and Foreign Minister Phil Goff said Annan was one of the world's most respected leaders. Holmes 'unreservedly withdrew' the remarks.

Farmers with tractors blocked the Wellington streets around Parliament (5 September) in protest at the government plans to impose a tax on livestock flatulence—the first in the world. It is estimated that wind from 30 million sheep, 10 million cattle and two million deer accounts for 60 per cent of New Zealand's greenhouse gas emissions—much more than industry. The government wants a

£110-a-year levy for research into how livestock emissions can be cut before compliance with the Kyoto protocol is required in 2008.

In another demonstration (7 October) outside parliament 9000 protestors, including naked members of an organization called Mothers Against Genetic Engineering, condemned government plans to lift a ban on genetic engineering of plants and animals. But on 29 October a two-year ban on GM crop trials was lifted.

### **Belize**

Guatemala repudiated (25 August 2003) an agreement brokered by the Organization of American States to settle its long-running dispute over 12 722 sq km of land. Under the agreement signed by the two countries in February, referenda were to be held on the terms of an accord in September 2002.

### **Grenada**

A report from Amnesty International (22 October 2003) pointed out that 17 prisoners detained by US troops in controversial circumstances after President Reagan ordered the invasion of Grenada were still in jail 20 years later. Amnesty said the prisoners were given an unfair trial for their rôle in the murder of prime minister Maurice Bishop. Fourteen were sentenced to death and had their sentence commuted. The 17 include coup leader Bernard Coard and his wife, who had recently been allowed hospital treatment. Grenadians remain divided over the issue, many believing the punishment was deserved.

### **Cayman Islands**

British Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown complained in September 2003 that the Caymans had not said how it intended to comply with European Union savings tax rules. He threatened to legislate. The British Virgin Islands, Turks and Caicos and Montserrat had promised compliance. Under the rules tax authorities will exchange information to increase revenue and tackle avoidance and fraud. The Caymans threatened to take Britain to court because it believed banks might leave the island if the rules were imposed. It suggested the issue might start a debate on self-determination.

### **Turks and Caicos Islands**

The results of two by-elections (7 August 2003) changed the government. The courts had found bribery and other irregularities in the April elections and ordered a new vote. The People's Democratic Movement now lost both polls to the Progressive National Party, which became the government, with eight of the 13 elected seats in the Legislative Council. Michael Musick took over from Derek Taylor as leader of the government.

### **Trinidad and Tobago**

An agreement was signed with Venezuela (12 August 2003) allowing shared exploitation of the oil and gas deposits on their maritime border. President Hugo

Chavez of Venezuela said the two countries would be able to create a 'single oil reservoir'. He visualized eventually a single multinational energy company out of the state-owned producers in Latin America and the Caribbean. Venezuela is the fifth biggest oil producer in the world, but is far behind Trinidad in developing its natural gas reserves.

The leader of Jamaat al Muslimeen, the militant Muslim sect involved in the coup attempt in 1990, was charged with conspiracy to murder (21 August) after a shooting incident in Port of Spain, in which one person died.

### **St Lucia**

Parliament passed (10 July) a constitutional amendment replacing the oath of allegiance and the judicial oath to Queen Elizabeth, its Head of State, with an oath of allegiance to St Lucia and its people.

### **Jamaica**

Prime Minister P. J. Patterson told a convention of the ruling People's National Party (18 September 2003) that, subject to a referendum, Queen Elizabeth would be replaced as Head of State and a republic set up by March 2005. Opposition leader Edward Seaga said his Jamaica Labour Party would not support the plan unless the government held a referendum on the proposed Caribbean Court of Justice.

The government ordered an inquiry into riots that blocked streets near Montego Bay in protest at the deaths of a taxi driver and newspaper seller (25 October 2003). The two men had been caught in crossfire when police fought an armed gang. It was yet another incident adding to the toll in a country with the highest police killings per capita in the world. A UN report issued at the time of the riot condemned Jamaica's record. Pressure from human rights organizations did seem to be forcing the government to act. Over the months it called in Scotland Yard, the Canadian Mounties and US law enforcers.

### **Bermuda**

Hurricane Fabian, the strongest storm to hit the island for 50 years, killed four people and caused widespread damage (5–7 September 2003). Nearly one-quarter of Bermuda's hotels and guest houses were badly damaged and had to close. Winds rose to 210 kph.

### **Antigua and Barbuda**

Two Commonwealth experts visited the country (14–20 September 2003) to report on the final phase of voter registration in preparation for a general election. They were Myrtle Palacio, Chief Elections officer, Belize Elections and Boundaries Commission, and Martin Masirye, of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

### **Canada**

The ruling Liberal Party chose former finance minister Paul Martin, 65, as its new leader. At a party convention (14 November 2003) he took 94 per cent of the

vote against 6 per cent for his sole opponent, former heritage minister Sheila Copps. He thus automatically became the next Canadian Prime Minister, succeeding his long-time rival Jean Chretien, on 10 December. Chretien sacked Martin in June 2002 for launching a leadership campaign against him. Martin won fame for bringing budgets under control between 1993 and 2002.

Chretien, at 69 the longest-serving leader in the West, said of his term in office that he had eliminated the country's huge deficit, created three million new jobs, and contained the Quebec separatist movement. On keeping his country out of the Iraq war, he said: 'We have also known when we must go our own way internationally—in a manner that is consistent with our values, doing the right thing, no matter how difficult'.

Finance Minister John Manley said (3 November) the economy had been hit by several factors in 2003 such as the outbreak of SARS, power failure in Toronto and flooding in British Columbia. As a result growth would be low at 1.9 per cent.

The two main conservative parties—the Progressive Conservative Party and the Canadian Alliance—ended 16 years of division on the right with a merger deal (16 October). The Progressives, led by Peter MacKay, are strongest in eastern Canada; the Alliance, led by Stephen Harper, strongest in the west. The new grouping hoped now to be a real challenge to the Liberals, but the deal was expected to take months to ratify.

Eight years of Progressive Conservative rule in Ontario ended with provincial elections (2 October 2003) in which the Liberal Party doubled its representation to 72 seats. The Conservatives fell from 24 seats to 56, with the New Democrats reduced from nine to seven. The Liberal agenda offered better healthcare and education. The new Premier, 48-year-old lawyer Dalton McGuinty, offered tax cuts.

In Toronto city elections (10 November) left-leaning councillor David Miller won 44 per cent of the vote against 38 per cent for businessman John Tory. As the new mayor, Miller promised to rid city hall of corruption and backroom dealing.

The ruling Progressive Conservative Party (PCP) led by Prime Minister John Hamm won a second successive victory in provincial elections in Nova Scotia (5 August), but without an overall majority. Turnout was the lowest since 1960. No formal coalition was agreed, but the two opposition parties said they would cooperate on an issue-by-issue basis. In Prince Edward Island Prime Minister Pat Binns won a third term in elections (29 September) for the PCP, taking 23 of the 27 seats on an 83 per cent turnout.

The World Health Organisation said (2 July) that it had removed Canada from the list of areas attacked by SARS.

## **United Kingdom**

In a move to encourage greater transparency the powers wielded by the government in the name of the monarchy were set down for the first time (20 October) by the House of Commons public administration committee. The royal prerogative, which includes the power to declare war, is handed from monarchs to ministers and lets them act without the backing of parliament. The powers include those allowing governments to regulate the civil service, issue passports, make treaties, appoint and remove ministers and grant honours.

After less than five months as Secretary of State for International Development, Baroness Amos was moved to become Leader of the House of Lords on the death of Lord Williams. Hilary Benn, No 2 at the Department, moved up to succeed her. He found himself in the Cabinet after only four years as an MP.

Results from the 2001 census showed that ethnic minorities make up 8 per cent of the UK population. In two areas—the London boroughs of Newham and Tower Hamlets—Asians and blacks outnumber whites for the first time. Pakistanis make up 14.5 per cent of the population of Bradford and one-third of the people of Tower Hamlets are Bangladeshi. Almost 30 per cent of the population of London were born outside the UK.

### **Gibraltar**

A report of the UK Foreign Affairs Committee (31 July 2003) said the British government had ‘misjudged and mishandled’ the Gibraltar question. Plans for joint sovereignty were wrong and unenforceable. The government should recognize that ‘the deal is dead and should arrange for a speedy burial’. The report also criticized Spain’s opposition to plans to allow voters in Gibraltar to take part in elections to the European parliament. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office said: ‘We do not accept the main conclusion of the report that joint sovereignty is unacceptable’.

The UK electoral commission said (28 August) Gibraltar should become an honorary part of a constituency in southwest UK for the 2004 European Parliament elections. In 1999 the European Court of Human Rights had granted voting rights to the people of Gibraltar, but the 30 000 population was not big enough to form its own constituency.

When the P&O liner *Aurora* docked in Gibraltar after a quarter of its passengers had been hit by a stomach virus the Spanish closed the border for the first time since 1969. They reopened it three hours after the ship departed (3 November 2003). UK Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary Jack Straw told Madrid its action was ‘unnecessary and disproportionate’.

### **Tristan da Cunha**

A plan to ship 146 pairs of rock-hopper penguins 1800 miles from uninhabited Nightingale Island to South Africa and disperse them to zoos around the world upset ornithologists. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds called on Bill Rammell, Minister for Overseas Territories, to halt the plan, but he said the decision had been taken by the island council and he would not overrule Administrator Bill Dickson, who authorised the move. The penguins are an endangered species and the protesters pointed out that they rely on large numbers to survive sharks and seals.

### **Cyprus**

A European Commission report (6 November 2003) linked the ending of the division of Cyprus with Turkey’s accession to the EU. The report said conditions were favourable for the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities to reach agreement by 1 May 2004—the date Cyprus joins the EU. It added: ‘The absence of a settlement could become a serious obstacle to Turkey’s aspirations’. A

complication in the situation seemed to arise when Turkey and North Cyprus signed a customs union deal (8 August). The EU expressed regret that it was not consulted. Cyprus ratified its treaty of accession to the EU (6 August), the third of the new members to do so after Malta and Poland.

The three parties in opposition to the government of Rauf Denktash in North Cyprus formed an alliance (4 September) to fight the December elections. They aimed to end Denktash's rôle as Turkish Cypriot negotiator and replace him with a team that would achieve a settlement on the basis of the UN plan on which talks had been stalled since March. Former UK special representative Lord Hannay blamed Denktash for the talks' failure (22 September) and said he did not believe there would be a settlement so long as the North Cyprus leadership remained the same.

### **Commonwealth Games**

India is to host the Games in 2010. In a vote (13 November 2003) taken when the General Assembly of the Commonwealth Games Federation met in Montego Bay, Jamaica, Delhi beat the Canadian city of Hamilton. It will be the first time India has held the Games, which in 2010 celebrates its 80th anniversary. The next Games in March 2006 will be in Melbourne. The Olympic Games and the Commonwealth Games are the only multi-sport events that involve athletes from all regions of the world. India hosted the inaugural Asian Games in 1951 and in October 2003 it held the inaugural Afro-Asian Games, in which 2500 athletes from nearly 100 nations took part.

### **Civil Society Organizations**

The Commonwealth Secretariat put in place new accreditation arrangements for civil society organizations (CSOs). For the first time organizations without the word Commonwealth in their title would be considered for accreditation. They need to be committed to the Commonwealth's fundamental values, represent its true diversity, be transparent, and open to all Commonwealth members. The new arrangements aim to strengthen networks for sharing expertise, information and experience—the people-to-people links. The Commonwealth Foundation and its director Colin Ball have pioneered these changes.

### **Commonwealth Education Ministers' Meeting**

Forty-two ministers attended the 15th Commonwealth Education Ministers' Meeting (27–30 October 2003) in Edinburgh. They sent a message to the CHOGM in Abuja urging more funding to meet the targets of Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals. To achieve universal primary education they pressed for action on eliminating gender disparities; stepping up distance education; mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS; and promoting Commonwealth resources networks. They formed a working group to develop a clear code for teacher recruitment. They endorsed the concept of a Virtual University for Small States and the proposal of the Commonwealth Institute to set up a Centre for Commonwealth Education in partnership with Cambridge University. The Centre will support primary and secondary education and teacher training in the Commonwealth. The funding for the Centre was expected

to come mainly from the sale of the Commonwealth Institute building in London's Kensington High Street, but meantime a private donation of £1.25 million was announced

In their message to CHOGM the Ministers drew attention to the need for young people to learn about the Commonwealth. This reflected anxieties expressed over many months that, in transferring its activities to Cambridge University, the Commonwealth Institute's rôle would now be about furthering educational cooperation between member countries and no longer about teaching the young about the Commonwealth.

### **Commonwealth Finance Ministers' Meeting**

Ministers gathered in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam (16–18 September) showed disappointment at the outcome of the Cancun World Trade Organization meeting and committed themselves to a positive outcome of the Doha Development round. They talked about giving developing countries a bigger voice in decision making in the World Bank and IMF and called for structural changes at the Board level, and action to counter money laundering and the financing of terrorism. The central item on the agenda was delivering basic services to the poor.

Ministers called on the Secretariat to do more to help small states, reminding Heads of Government that the resources of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation were still 40 per cent below the target they themselves set in 1995. The meeting was notable for the rôle beginning to be played by civil society representatives as well as for that by the Commonwealth Business Council—for example, on such matters as creating an index and associated framework of business principles that could facilitate greater portfolio equity flows to emerging markets.

### **Meetings during the UN General Assembly**

Five Commonwealth ministerial meetings were held during the UN General Assembly meeting in September 2003—a Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG), the Commonwealth Committee on Terrorism, and the Ministerial Groups on Belize and Guyana.

At the CMAG meeting the Solomon Islands Foreign Minister gave a rundown on the situation in his country following the success of the mission led by Australia. CMAG decided the Solomons should come off its agenda. But on the Fiji Islands it said the Secretary-General should stay involved while the constitutional situation remains unresolved.

On Pakistan, which remained suspended from the councils of the Commonwealth, CMAG said that, if the parliamentary deadlock could be resolved and a 'comprehensive package were passed in parliament in accordance with the constitution', it could recommend that the suspension be lifted. Any action on the other suspended member, Zimbabwe, was left to the Abuja CHOGM.

### **Secretary-General's Report**

Don Mckinnon delivered the Secretary-General's biennial pre-CHOGM report in November. In his foreword he underlined a main theme of his first term in

office—the need to make the world a fair marketplace for developing countries' goods and services. He said: 'The single biggest measure developed countries could take to tackle world poverty would be to end trade-distorting subsidies. Sadly, talk is long and cheap on this topic; delivery is short and progress painfully slow'.

### **Around the Commonwealth**

A Memorandum of Understanding outlining collaboration between the Commonwealth and La Francophonie on trade matters relating to the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries was signed at a meeting between the two Secretaries-General, Don McKinnon and Abdou Diouf (6 November 2003).

A workshop attended by 30 organizations (26 September) discussed research findings by the Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit that a high level of apathy about the Commonwealth and its activities exists among young people. Strategies to attract the young were critical for the continued survival of the official and unofficial Commonwealth.

At a gathering of youth ministers, youth leaders and youth entrepreneurs in Cooloom, Australia in November, 270 delegates from 45 countries resolved to enhance opportunities for youth enterprise development in their own countries. The Forum was Australia's contribution to the Youth for the Future initiative launched by the 2002 CHOGM. A variety of pledges came from the meeting—India to set up demonstration plants to showcase youth enterprise, the African region to launch youth enterprise awards, Singapore to convene a national youth forum. And many more.

Delegates from 20 countries discussed the development of information and communication technologies in the Commonwealth at a meeting in London hosted by the Commonwealth Business Council (6–7 October). Central to the talks was the problem of the digital divide.

The Commonwealth Science Council met in Johannesburg (10–12 June) and set up a task team to work out a renewal plan. It extended the term of the chairman, South African Science and Technology Minister Dr Ben Ngubane, and the executive committee until December to complete the plan.

Two hundred young people from all over the world were welcomed in London (17 November) under the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan, which is administered by the Association of Commonwealth Universities. Some 21 000 have held awards since the scheme began. The first directory of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows was launched during the Education Ministers' Meeting in Edinburgh. It is planned, with Canadian and UK help, to create a world-wide electronic community of all the holders.

Commonwealth Health Ministers, meeting in Geneva (18 May), signed a Commonwealth Code of Practice for International Recruitment of Health Workers. The code aims to improve ways international recruitment can be better managed so that recruits, recruiters and source countries can all benefit.

A regional workshop for human rights advocates in Asia was held in Colombo (22–23 October). It was organized by the Commonwealth Human Rights Unit and brought together government officials from Sri Lanka, and human rights commissions from Bangladesh, India, Malaysia and Singapore and civil society organizations.

The 13th conference of the Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges Association in Mangochi, Malawi (24–29 August) drew 300 delegates, focusing on the delivery of justice and protection of human rights, enforcement of social and economic rights, rights of the child, combating corruption within the judiciary and judicial protection of the environment.

A seminar for senior public sector officials from Commonwealth countries in Africa, North America and the Caribbean held in South Africa (3–8 August) was to be followed by a meeting for Botswana, Namibia and Nigeria to advance their reform programmes.

Two hundred pharmacists from 40 countries at the eighth conference of the Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association in Ochos Rios, Jamaica (14–17 August) put HIV/AIDS high on their agenda and drafted a statement setting out the pharmacists' rôle in managing the disease.

A workshop on HIV/AIDS in Belize for senior Caribbean civil servants sponsored by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (17–19 September) sought to alert governments that AIDS could lose the region 5 per cent of its GDP by 2005. A new drive involving the Commonwealth Youth Programme has begun in Guyana—the worst affected Commonwealth Caribbean country—with a pilot training project for 21 young people that it is hoped might show a lead to the region.

The Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation decided at its 43rd meeting in Kampala, Uganda (18–11 September) to expand its membership to include a wide range of information and communications technology organizations and private industry in Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth countries.

The Commonwealth Broadcasting Association awards in 2003 were dominated by the success of India. The prize-giving was in New Delhi (28 October) and the Award for Exceptional News Feature went to two Indian journalists for coverage of the communal riots in Gujarat. The winner of the Commonwealth Short Story competition was also an Indian and four other Indian writers were highly commended.

Dr John Rowett, Chief Executive of the Rhodes Trust, has been appointed to take over as Secretary-General of the Association of Commonwealth Universities when Professor Michael Gibbons retires in July 2004.

New publications from the Commonwealth Secretariat include:

*Commonwealth Ministers Reference Book 2003*, edited by Cheryl Dorall, 104pp.

*Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2003*, 204 pp.

*Making Democracy Work for Pro-poor Development: Report of a Commonwealth Group of Experts*, 106 pp.

*Democracy and Development. Report of the Commonwealth Secretary-General 2003*, 52 pp.

*Education in the Commonwealth: The First 40 Years*, edited by Lalage Brown, 215 pp.

*Commonwealth Education Partnerships 2004*, 374 pp.

*An Introduction to Law and Human Rights for Young People in the Commonwealth* by John Hatchard, 102 pp.

*Fisheries Issues in WTO and ACP-EU Trade Negotiations*, edited by Roman Grynberg, 91 pp.

*A Profile of the Public Service of New Zealand: Current Good Practices and New Developments in Public Service Management*, 49 pp.

*Gender Mainstreaming in the Multilateral Trading System: A Handbook for Policy-Makers and Other Stakeholders*, 228 pp.

*Tackling the Unconstitutional Overthrow of Democracies—Emerging Trends in the Commonwealth* by John Hatchard and Dr Tunde Ogowewo, 212 pp.

*Managing Schools in South Africa*, three volumes, 234 pp., 207 pp., 242 pp.

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