



### Quebec separatists trounced

**MONTREAL:** The separatist Parti Quebecois lost its grip on Quebec in elections, effectively knocking independence off the agenda for the French-speaking Canadian province. The



Quebec Liberal Party won a decisive majority in the provincial Assembly on Monday, thwarting the separatists' bid to extend their nine years in power. "It's a mandate for change, a mandate for renewal that we have received," the Liberal leader, Jean Charest, said. Mr. Charest will form a new provincial Government, with a substantial majority of 76 seats in

the 125-member Assembly, according to partial results. Parti Quebecois won 45 seats, while the Democratic Action of Quebec party trailed with four seats *(in the picture, Mr. Charest celebrates the victory with supporters in Montreal on Monday).* — AFP

### 18-year term for Fortuyn killer

**AMSTERDAM:** The confessed assassin of the Dutch populist politician, Pim Fortuyn, was jailed for 18 years on Monday for the Netherlands' first political killing in more than three centuries. The animal rights activist, Volkert van der Graaf, whose trial ended two weeks ago, had admitted to shooting Fortuyn at point-blank range nine days before May 2002 elections that swept the taboo-breaking politician's novice party into power.

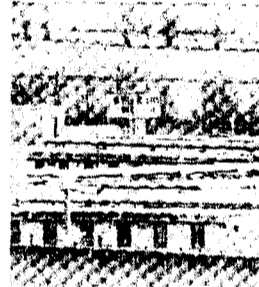
"The accused went about his plan to kill the victim with calm consideration," the presiding judge, Frans Bauduin, told a high-security court on the outskirts of Amsterdam.

Van der Graaf said he shot Fortuyn because he saw him as a danger to society who was trying to make scapegoats of vulnerable social groups for his own gain *(in the picture, a supporter of Fortuyn reacts with disappointment after the court verdict).* — Reuters



### Prisoners escape by helicopter

**AIX-EN-PROVENCE (FRANCE):** Police fanned out across southern France as officials on Tuesday vowed to capture three jail inmates who escaped by



helicopter on Monday. The prisoners fled with the help of accomplices who hijacked a helicopter and ordered the pilot to hover over the prison courtyard in Luyens, southeastern France, police said. One of the accomplices dropped from the helicopter on a rope ladder and used a high-powered saw to cut through the prison's steel security netting. The three inmates —

accused of running an international drug ring — grabbed hold of the ladder and were flown away. Police said the helicopter landed shortly afterward in a nearby stadium, from where the prisoners fled by car *(the picture shows the prison buildings in Luyens).* — AP

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