

# Hurd asks Delhi, Pindi to settle Kashmir issue under '72 agreement

ISLAMABAD, Nov 1: British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd called on Saturday for a political process in disputed Kashmir that would enable popular representatives to discuss the future of the Himalayan region with India, reports Reuter.

"It is in the interest of both India and Pakistan to settle the issue in accordance with the aspirations of the people of Kashmir," he told a news conference during a one-day visit to Pakistan.

Kashmir was an issue that must be tackled, Hurd said,

since it would not be forgotten. He called for talks on the region, two-thirds of which is ruled by India and the rest by Pakistan, under a 1972 peace agreement between the two countries to build confidence.

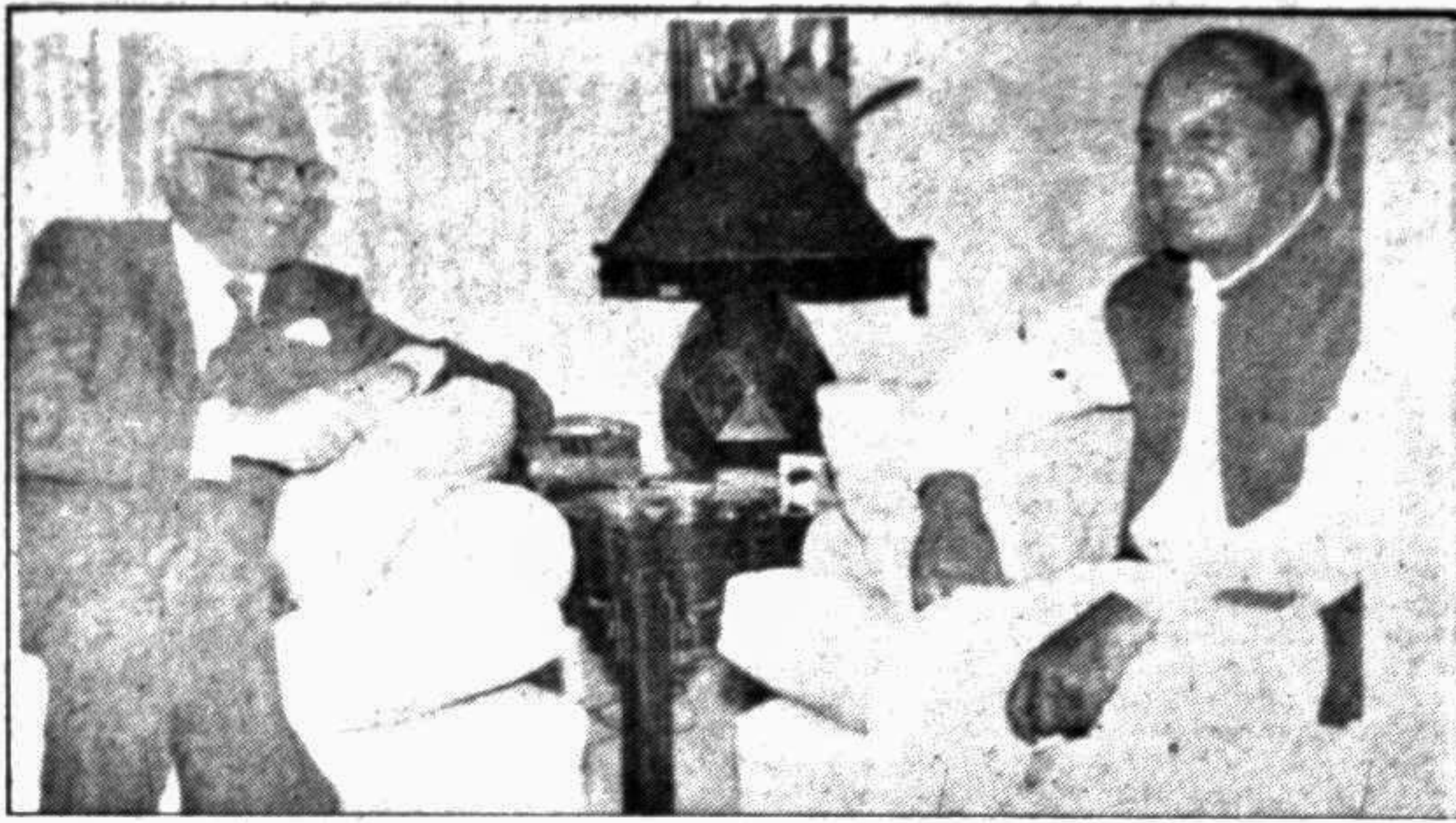
He urged the initiation of a "valid political process" that would give its people representation to discuss their future with the Indian government.

The mountainous region has been racked since 1990 by a popular uprising against Indian rule in which more than 8,500 people have died.

Hurd said he told his Pakistani counterpart Mohammad Siddique Khan that Islamabad should not allow militant support to reach the militants fighting in divided Kashmir.

India accuses Islamabad of training and arming the many militant groups involved in the present revolt in the Muslim majority states and seeking independence or union with Islamic Pakistan.

Pakistan denies the charge and says its support for the militants is only moral and political.



ISLAMABAD: British Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd (L) shares a joke with Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Saturday, prior to talks during the former's one day official visit to Pakistan. — AFP/UNB photo

## BRIEFLY

**Qatar's envoy resumes duty in Iraq:** Qatar's ambassador to Baghdad, who returned last week after an absence of more than two years, has called on other Gulf Arab states to mend fences with Iraq, Al-Jumhuriya newspaper reported Saturday, reports AFP from Baghdad.

"I have found that Iraqi leaders sincerely want to turn a new page with Arab countries and to restore Arab cohesion," said Rashid Al-Khalifa, who has met President Saddam Hussein since his return on Monday. "We must all forget the errors of the past and work to crystallize a new strategy for the cause of Arab security," he told the official newspaper.

Khalifa is the first Ambassador from a country belonging to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to resume duties in Iraq since the August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

**US shocked at deaths of nuns:** The United States on Saturday said it was "shocked and appalled" at the killing of five American nuns in Liberia, reports Reuter from Washington.

The State Department called for an immediate ceasefire and new negotiations to end the African nation's civil war.

"The United States is shocked and appalled to hear of the deaths of five American nuns who were killed in Liberia, and condemns this cowardly act," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said in a statement.

"Few details are available, but it appears the nuns were killed several days ago in an area that has been under the control of NPFL (National Patriotic Front of Liberia) forces loyal to Charles Taylor. The United States holds the NPFL responsible for the safety of foreign nationals in territory under its control," Boucher said.



**NAIROBI: HIV positive Julius Kibe (R), 23 months old, whose mother died of AIDS when he was born, lies in an orphanage on Saturday. There are thought to be between 750,000 and one million HIV and AIDS cases in this east African country of 24 million people, and UNICEF estimates that 3 per cent of babies are born HIV positive.** — AFP/UNB photo

**French Muslims slate Bosnia war:** Several thousand people marched through Paris Saturday against the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in support of the embattled republic's Muslim population, AFP reports from Paris.

The demonstrators carried banners which read "halt the massacre" and "no to the camps."

The demonstration, which was called by the National Federation of Muslims of France, ended at the Institute of the Arab World, where the marchers dispersed peacefully amid cries of "Allah Akbar (God is Great)".

**ANC may share power with NP:** The African National Congress is considering a power-sharing deal with the ruling white National Party (NP) after the next general election, according to a report in the Johannesburg Sunday Times, AFP says from Johannesburg.

The report quotes a leaked "secret document" containing decisions made in a recent ANC leadership meeting as saying that the ANC could seek to join a government of national unity with the NP even after an interim government has served its term and all race elections are held.

The suggestion was contained in a "draft policy document", according to the newspaper.

**Blast kills 2 in Thailand:** An unidentified man tossed a hand grenade on to the stage at a concert by a Thai singer and political activist, killing two people and wounding nine, police said yesterday, Reuter reports from Bangkok.

The man threw the grenade onto the platform as Arisman Pongruengrungs was performing, said police in Ratchaburi province, about 100 km (60 miles) south of Bangkok.

The M-26 grenade rolled off the back of the stage and exploded, killing two people and injuring nine. About 3,000 people who attended the concert on Friday night fled in panic, they added.

The singer escaped injury because his brother pushed him to the floor just before the blast, police said.

# Hundreds of people die of starvation in Mozambique this yr

MAQUEZE (Mozambique), Nov 1: Through shimmering heat rising from the scorching sand, hundreds of women and their starving children descended on this parched village for their monthly Red Cross rations, reports AP.

Several hundred starvation deaths have been reported this year, however, 30 to 50 per cent of the children are malnourished in places such as Maqueze, and relief groups have not been able to reach remote villages controlled by the guerrilla group known as Renamo.

Those figures pale beside Somalia, where more than 100,000 have died, largely because anarchy arrived before large-scale aid.

"I don't think we'll have another Somalia here," said

Joe Kessler of CARE, the New York aid organization that has helped the Mozambican government coordinate its relief programme since 1984. "There will be pockets of starvation, but not mass starvation. The bottom line is that people are getting enough food to stay alive."

No one can say when Mozambique's aid dependency will end.

President Joaquim Chissano's leftist government and the right-wing rebels signed a cease-fire October 4, but sporadic fighting continues.

The war's end may even increase the need for assistance at the least temporarily. About 1.6 million Mozambicans who have fled to neighbouring countries will need food, seeds and farming tools when they

## DPRK ship with 100 Scuds on way to ME

WASHINGTON, Nov 1: A North Korean ship with as many as 100 advanced Scud missiles is on its way to the Middle East, US News and World Report magazine said in its latest issue, released on Saturday, reports Reuter.

The News Magazine said US intelligence agencies expect the ship to reach the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas late in November. Half the missiles will go to Iran and the others will be shipped to Syria, the magazine said.

Last year, a North Korean ship carrying missiles bound for Syria turned back with mechanical problems but another shipment made it to Iran, US news said in its "Washington whispers" column.

## 'Major Britain's most unpopular Prime Minister'

LONDON, Nov 1: John Major has become Britain's most unpopular Prime Minister since opinion polling began in the 1940s, according to a survey for the Sunday Times, reports Reuter.

The Mori poll showed that only 21 per cent of those questioned were satisfied with Major's performance compared to 33 per cent a month ago.

The findings follow a series of humiliating set-backs for Major and his Conservative government since mid-September, including the withdrawal of sterling from the European Community's exchange rate mechanism and a national outcry over plans, later suspended, to shut more than half Britain's coal mines.

The Mori poll also showed a sharp fall in confidence over the economy with only 14 per cent seeing an improvement over the next year. Sixty per cent thought it would get worse.

Major is now embroiled in a stand-off with rebels in his own party over the Maastricht treaty on closer European political and monetary union.

## Expelled HK journalist back home

HONG KONG, Nov 1: A Hong Kong reporter who was accused of stealing Chinese state secrets returned to the British colony Sunday following her expulsion by Chinese authorities, reports AP.

Leung Wai Man, 32, a reporter for the Chinese-language Express (Fai Pao), was mobbed by friends and reporters on her return, but she declined to discuss her detention by Chinese authorities, saying she was tired.

She was arrested in her hotel room in Beijing on October 24 by officials from the State Security Ministry who accused her of paying money to a Chinese government employee and his accomplice for state secrets.

## Babri Mosque dispute VHP serves notice to Rao

NEW DELHI, Nov 1: Hindu holy men have ended a "religious parliament" here after serving notice to Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao that Hindus remain determined to erect a temple on the site of a disputed Muslim shrine, reports AFP.

The dispute has been at the centre of communal rioting across India which has left hundreds dead.

The two-day gathering of 5,000 Hindu men sponsored by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP, World Hindu Council) dispersed Saturday, saying the December 6 date they set for restarting work on the temple

was irrevocable.

VHP General Secretary Ashok Singhal said nothing would stop the work from beginning on schedule at the site of the 16th century Mosque in Ayodhya, in northern Uttar Pradesh state.

The state is governed by the Hindu revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party), an ardent champion of the temple crusade.

But not even a possible threat by Rao to dismiss the Uttar Pradesh government, if it were to support the planned resumption of temple construction, would stop the VHP,

Singhal said.

He told reporters the VHP had faith neither in Rao's ability to settle the issue nor in the courts, whose rulings he said were "not always judicious."

"If Narasimha Rao had the will, he could have solved the issue," Singhal said. "He had the power to do so. But he is not doing it intentionally."

The VHP-sponsored religious parliament accused the 71-year-old premier and his Congress (I) Party of pampering Muslims to attract Muslim voters and doing nothing to ensure the shrine's handover to the Hindu majority.

## Dimilitarisation of Salvador demanded

EL SALVADOR, Nov 1: More than 25,000 Salvadorans paraded Saturday to demand that the government comply with UN peace accords that ended the country's 12-year civil war, reports AP.

The march, heavily peppered with banners of the rebel Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, wound up in front of the national cathedral where leaders chanted for demilitarisation of El Salvador and a purge from the army of human rights violators.

It was one of the larger gatherings in the war-torn country in recent years. But at times it took on the air of a

college pep rally, with pom-poms and colored ribbons flying among the crowd.

Saturday was to have been the deadline for compliance with all of the UN-brokered accords signed in Mexico City in January, including the demobilization of the guerrilla forces estimated at 8,000.

A number of issues remain unresolved, including judicial and electoral reforms, the purge of the military and land distribution.

When the growing delays threatened to derail the peace process, the United Nations suggested postponing the deadline to December 15.

## IRA claims responsibility of bombing

LONDON, Nov 1: The Irish Republican Army, fighting to oust Britain from Northern Ireland, claimed responsibility on Saturday for a car bomb that exploded near Prime Minister John Major's London office, reports Reuter.

A statement issued by the IRA in Dublin said the bombing on Friday evening at the corner of Downing Street was carried out by one of its active service units.

"No-one was injured when the bomb exploded on the back seat of a mini-cab that had been hijacked at gunpoint by two men."

## Winners receive Asturias Prize

OVIEDO (Spain), Nov 1: Personalities from the worlds of politics, science, sports and the arts, including Nelson Mandela, F W de Klerk and Elizabeth Taylor, on Saturday were awarded the prestigious Prince of Asturias Prize, reports AP.

Prince Felipe de Borbon, the heir to the Spanish throne, presented eight of the awards, considered the Nobel Prizes of the Spanish-speaking world.

"The way to concord has united them in a dialogue, which despite obstacles, has

been promoted again and again by their courage," Felipe said of African National Congress President Mandela and South African President de Klerk, who was represented by Africa's ambassador to Spain Frederich Gustav Conradie.

Felipe called the men's leadership in negotiations to end white-minority rule in South Africa "beautiful examples of how good faith and generosity transform loneliness into companionship, and violence into peace."

Mandela, who shared the

prize in the international co-operation category, responded that "we must... pay our tribute to the international community for its contribution to the struggle against racism and apartheid, and especially for the sacrifices made by many countries in Africa."

He continued: "Without such solidarity, we would not be walking the last mile to freedom."

Taylor accepted the prize for "solidarity" on behalf of the American Foundation for AIDS Research, a New York-based group that has distributed some \$50 million since 1985 for AIDS research, education and public policy programmes.



SPAIN: American actress and AIDS activist Elizabeth Taylor (L) and Spanish Prince Felipe de Bourbon during "the Prince of Asturias" ceremony on Saturday. Taylor receives the Concord award of the Prince of Asturias foundation on behalf of the American Foundation for AIDS Research (AMFAR). — AFP/UNB photo

## She is now a different woman

PHILIPPINES: Corazon Aquino has no regrets about her six turbulent years as president of the Philippines, but the former housewife does not try to hide her relief at returning to ordinary civilian life, reports AFP.

She now comes across as a different woman from the one who — constantly in the go, often on the defensive — led the Philippines from February 1986 until June.

Her bearing, her tone and even her smile have been transformed.

The Hectienda Luisa is part of her secret.

At the ancestral home of the Cojuangcos — Aquino's maternal family — she is far removed from the nation's poverty and numerous other problems.

The 6,000 — hectare (14,820-acre) sugarcane plantation north of Manila has its own private golf course and a farm of 100 fighting cocks.

But the key to the former President's transformation lies simply in having the heavy weight of power removed from her shoulders.

Even if rain is plentiful this year, there will be fewer farmers growing food.

"Whenever people move to the cities, they become dependent on food aid," said John Yale, in charge of Mozambique for World Vision, a charity based in Los Angeles. "The food aid is still being moved out, but we're reaching our limits."

Mozambique is perhaps the most desperate nation on Earth after Somalia and has similar needs. Both require roughly 50,000 tons of donated food each month to feed 3 to 5 million people.

Fortunately, for Mozambique, its relief network has been in place since the last major drought in 1983 and aid generally has been reaching the worst afflicted.

Conditions have been getting worse each year," said Simiao Banze, a health worker born in a village just outside Maqueze. "Our cattle were stolen in the war. Now there is no rain and we have no seeds to plant."

Drought has forced many peasants to leave their land for the cities, pushing the need for aid to an all-time high.

## Off the Record

**Lesbian appointed pastor**

IRVING, Texas: A lawyer for churches trying to block a lesbian from becoming pastor of a Presbyterian church told the denomination's ruling body Friday that it can't remain true to its standards and let her take the pulpit, reports AP.

"We are talking about conduct that is in conflict with the moral principles of the Church," attorney Julius Poppings told a hearing of the church's highest US authority.

After years of appeals, the Presbyterian Church (USA) is to rule whether a homosexual may serve as pastor.

The Rev Jane Spahr was appointed a pastor of the Downtown United Presbyterian Church in Rochester, N.Y. last November. But appeals by a group of 10 churches in an upstate New York presbytery, which includes the Rochester church, have prevented her from assuming her duties.

Spahr didn't speak Friday during brief testimony at a meeting of the permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly.

James C. Moore, an attorney representing Spahr and the Rochester church, said, "At no time did Jesus Christ speak, criticize, condemn or otherwise address the subject of homosexuality." Jesus did admonish his followers "to love our fellow human beings, as we would be loved," Moore said.

## Clinton a bass?

CHIPPEWA FALLS: President George Bush said Friday he would stop calling rival Democrat Bill Clinton a "Bozo".

Instead, on Saturday, he began comparing Clinton to a bass, reports AP.

On a three-day campaign swing through states not yet safely in the Bush camp, the president verbally assaulted the Arkansas governor.

"Governor Clinton, over the last 24 hours, has been frantically flopping around like a bass on the side of the Arkansas river," he said.

The Democratic candidate has said Bush's credibility was called into question by a January 1986 memo written by then Defence Secretary Casper Weinberger indicating then-Vice President Bush supported a plan to sell missiles to Iran in exchange for the release of US hostages in Lebanon.

"Being attacked by Governor Clinton on character is like being called ugly by a frog," he said.

Bush apologized Friday for calling Clinton and Vice Presidential candidate Albert Gore Bozos, saying it had been meant to be funny. Now he only calls members of Congress Bozos.



**They teach the children abortion, premarital sex**

SAN DIEGO: A Halloween haunted house staged by a fundamentalist Christian group featured graphic skits showing aborted fetuses, angry parents said the church gave no warning about the theme, reports AP.

"I was appalled," said Christine Cummins, 25, who walked through the house holding her 1-year-old son. "I can't believe they're showing this to small children."

The haunted house was sponsored by the 100-member Potter's House Christian Fellowship. Congregation members acted out skits about topics such as drug abuse and abortion.

"Our primary objective is to teach the gospel," said Pastor Alpha Fisher, leader of Potter's House. "We use the haunted house as a tool. These are real issues in life, and they have to be addressed — drunk driving, abortion, premarital sex."

The haunted house opened Thursday and was to run through Saturday night, the third year it has been presented, Fisher said. He said children under 13 were not allowed in unless accompanied by parents.

## You won't believe it unless you see

JACKSON HOLE: A man drilling a water well hit ice instead, 180 feet (55 meters) deep in the ground, reports AP.

A geologist said it probably dated from the Ice Age.

Jack Weber, who owns a well-drilling company, said his son was drilling a well on a ranch in northwest Wyoming recently and had reached a depth of 180 feet (55 meters) when he noticed ice among the chips being blown from the hole.

The ice continued coming out as the hole got deeper, and Weber called David Love, a US Geological Survey geologist, who was able to preserve a few chips before it melted.

"You wouldn't believe it unless you saw it," Love said. "It's weird."

Love said the ice was probably frozen between 10,000 and 50,000 years ago when Jackson Hole was covered by a 2,000-foot-deep (610-meter-deep) glacier.

"Water got into the cavities and cracks and froze," Love said. "After the glaciers melted, the ice stayed there."

## 666 mark of devil

ANCHORAGE, Alaska: The computer that issues drivers' license numbers chose the prefix 666 just in time for Halloween, reports AP.

Juanita Hensley, chief of driver services for the state Division of Motor Vehicles, said the computer that automatically assigns numbers to new drivers clicked over automatically when the 666 prefix was used up recently.

Some people associate 666 with the devil, based on a biblical reference in the book of Revelation. Several complained to the state.

"One lady said it was the mark of the beast," Hensley said. "She said she did not want to be associated with the devil."

About 2,500 licenses were issued before officials decided to nudge the computer to 667.

"I did not want 10,000 people calling me," Hensley said.

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