

### Strike paralyzes West Bengal

**CALCUTTA, Nov 6:** Businesses, schools and government offices in the eastern metropolis were closed Friday after several opposition political parties called for a one-day strike to protest the killing of seven people in police firing Tuesday, reports AP.

Nearly a dozen strikes — often violent — are organized every year in West Bengal state, where a communist government has been in power for 20 years. Most people stay home, fearing attacks. Strike breakers are routinely beaten up.

The strike was called by Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's Congress Party and several small opposition groups. They said lawlessness in the state had worsened over the years.

On Tuesday, police fired at a violent mob in Hortharpara, 300 kilometers (185 miles) north of Calcutta.

On Friday, Calcutta streets were deserted.

Indian Airlines, the nation's domestic airline service, did not operate most flights out of the metropolis, home to 11 million people.

Loading and unloading of cargo at the Calcutta port, one of the busiest in the nation, was severely hit, officials said.

## Experts, top military officials oppose an end to ban on homosexuals

# No major changes in US defence policy soon

**WASHINGTON, Nov 6:** Except for the difficult issues of homosexuals in uniform and women in combat US defence policy is not expected to change quickly or dramatically under new Commander-in-Chief Bill Clinton, reports Reuter.

Clinton will slash the Star Wars missile defence programme and withdraw more troops from Europe, but has promised only moderate new cuts in Pentagon spending as he follows George Bush's path to smaller, mobile, high-tech forces.

Former navy fighter pilot Bush made much of the 60 billion dollar in extra cuts planned by Democrat Clinton over five years, but analysts note that defence budgets during the period would still total a significant 1.36 trillion dollar.

However, private defence experts and senior US military officials think the president-elect's vow to end the long-standing ban on accepting homosexuals will be a painful wrench for the conservative military.

Clinton, a strong advocate of women's rights, must also deal with Tuesday's recommendations by a Bush commission to keep women out of US ground combat units and warplanes. Those recommendations came on the day Americans voted five women into the US Senate.

Virtually all senior military officers, led by Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Colin Powell, oppose accepting gays in the military despite a recent decision by Canada to do so. Many also oppose putting women in front-line combat, including the commission's vote to allow females on warships.

"I frankly don't think there will be a hell of a lot of difference in defence posture under Clinton, said one senior army general privately.

But the homosexual thing really bothers me. There will be a major morale problem. It's not enough to say homosexual acts won't be allowed in the barracks, in foxholes or on ships. There is a strong feeling that the lifestyle is incompatible with the job; added a navy captain, who also asked to remain anonymous.

But the military will get used to it. It was new and wrenching when Harry Truman integrated blacks into all units after World War Two and nobody gives it a second thought today, said James Blackwell of the centre for strategic and international studies in Washington.

Clinton concentrated on domestic issues in



President Boris Yeltsin talks with US President-elect Bill Clinton over telephone and invites him to visit Russia. —STAR TV photo

the campaign but repeatedly championed technical research to keep America ahead in military and business. He also suggested he would make these specific defence changes.

—Deep cuts in the strategic defence initiative, commonly called Star Wars, and shelve plans for space-based arms to shoot down enemy ballistic missiles.

—Cut the active military to 1.4 million from 1.6 million by the end of 1997, a change that probably would have come anyway after the cold war.

—Reduce US forces in Europe below 100,000 instead of 150,000 planned by Bush in four years. Congress already is pushing for 100,000.

—Reduce the number of aircraft carriers to 10 from the today's planned 12, despite major navy opposition.

—Proceed with development of the V-22 tilt-rotor aircraft, which would take off like a helicopter while zipping troops into battle like a regular air plane. Defence Secretary Dick Cheney has repeatedly tried to kill the programme.

—Clinton has not indicated specifically what his policy will be on US cooperation within a nervous NATO alliance.

—But he has stressed that he will follow the Democrats' tradition of close ties with Israel. Bush often took a hard line towards Israel's leadership while selling billions of dollars in US arms to friendly Arab states.

Clinton has not said whom he will name to replace the popular Cheney. Senator Sam Nunn, Democrat of Georgia, and Democratic representatives Les Aspin of Wisconsin and Dave Mccurdy of Oklahoma have been mentioned in published reports.

### UNITA army chief killed

**LISBON, Nov 6:** The Angolan government confirmed for the first time today that opposition UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi's army chief was killed in weekend fighting in the capital Luanda, reports Reuter.

State-run Angolan National Radio, monitored by the Portuguese news agency Lusa, said the charred body of UNITA chief of staff general Arlindo Chenda Pena 'Ben-Ben' was found in a burnt-out car near in Luanda.

Rumours that the general had been wounded, captured or killed had been circulating since ferocious fighting between UNITA (Union for the Total Independence of Angola) and government forces flared up a week ago.

Many other top UNITA Vice-president Jeremias Chitunda. The two were apparently killed while trying to flee the capital with two British hostages.

UNITA has accused the ex-Marxist MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) government of trying to wipe out its high command after Savimbi rejected the outcome of September elections which gave the MPLA a landslide victory.

Thousands of people are thought to have been killed in a week of fighting which has sparked fears the country may slide back into civil war.

## BRIEFLY

**Akihito in Sri Lanka:** Japan's Prince Akihito and Princess Kiko arrived in Sri Lanka Friday on a three-day official visit to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two Asian countries, AP reports from Colombo.

The royal couple is scheduled to meet with President Ranasinghe Premadasa and former President Junius Jayawardana later Friday.

They also will visit the Temple of the Tooth in central Sri Lanka where a tooth of Lord Buddha is believed to be kept.

The visiting prince is the second son of Japanese Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko. This is the couple's first visit to the Buddhist-majority island nation.

**\$ 100m US aid for UNICEF:** The United States on Thursday donated 100 million dollar UN Children's Fund, the largest single cash donation since UNICEF was established 46 years ago, Reuter reports from United States.

A statement by UNICEF said Edward Perkins, the US ambassador to the United Nations, handed over a check for 100 million dollar to James Grant, the American Executive Director of UNICEF.

Washington last year contributed 85 million dollar to UNICEF. Congress on October 6 approved the increased donation as part of the foreign aid appropriations bill, which President George Bush signed a day later.

**Police official killed in Peru:** Shining Path rebels gunned down the third most-important officer in Peru's anti-terrorism force as he left home Thursday morning, officials said, AP reports from Lima.

Col. Manuel Tumba was the third member of Dincote police force attacked and the second to die since the September 12 capture of rebel leader Abimael Guzman, a Dincote spokesman said.

Tumba was Dincote's chief of administration, the spokesman said. He denied earlier military statements that Tumba led Dincote's elite Delta Group, a unit trained for special anti-subversive operations.

**Indonesia blocks Amnesty visit:** Indonesia has blocked a planned visit to troubled East Timor by Amnesty International on the anniversary of last year's massacre by Indonesian troops, the human rights group said yesterday, Reuter reports from Sydney.

The London-based group said it applied to visit the former Portuguese colony, invaded by Indonesia in 1975 and annexed the following year, and quoted Indonesian authorities saying such a visit "would create problems for the Timorese people."

**Saddam visits Ninveh:** Iraqi President Saddam Hussein visited his country's northern province of Ninveh on Thursday, the official INA news agency said, AFP reports from Baghdad.

The province is located north of the 36th parallel, which marks the southern limit of a security zone set up by the victorious allies after the Gulf War early last year.

The agency did not say which towns the Iraqi leader visited. The main town in Ninveh is Mosul, which is mainly inhabited by Iraqi Arabs rather than Kurds, and was not affected by the Kurdish revolt that followed the end of the war.

It is located some 60 kilometres (35 miles) from the incalmar border of Kurdish-administered northern Iraq.

**One killed in Manila mishap:** A fuel truck spilled oil on a major highway, sending nearly 70 vehicles spinning out of control Friday in a massive rush-hour pileup that killed at least one person, AP reports from Manila.

Police were still trying to unsnarl the traffic jam hours after the accident along the South Expressway, the major artery from southeastern suburbs into Manila. They said scores of vehicles slammed into one another or careened off the highway.

Investigators said they were uncertain what caused the leak from the truck, which was headed from a petroleum refinery in Batangas province when the leak developed.

## Indo-Pak talks on Siachen dispute will continue

**NEW DELHI, Nov 6:** India and Pakistan have decided to continue their dialogue on the disputed Siachen Glacier after a round of talks here this week sparked hope that the two neighbours were ready to bridge differences, reports AP.

Another round of talks will be held soon in Islamabad after the two delegations report to their political leaders, Indian defence officials said today.

The officials said some agreements in certain fields had been reached on the dispute over the 17,400-foot (5,300-metre) high Glacier, where troops of the two South Asian rivals frequently clash.

They gave no substantive details.

India insists that the Saltoro Ridge on the 72-kilometre (43-mile) long Glacier, known as the world's highest battleground, is in the Indian Zone of Kashmir.

But Pakistan claims its ownership, saying it was seized by India prior to a 1972 peace pact.

The possible joint mapping of a line of control stretching across Siachen and dividing the Indian and Pakistani zones of Kashmir was one of the topics discussed at the talks here which ended Wednesday.

An extended session expected to be held Thursday

did not take place.

Pakistan Defence Secretary S S A Gilani, who led his delegation, on Wednesday voiced hope that the two sides were heading towards a "positive settlement."

It was the sixth round of talks, and the first in three years, held on the Siachen issue since a major clash in 1987 left scores of troops dead on the icy wasteland.

Officials say maintenance of a heavy military deployment on the Glacier is a major drain on funds, manpower and military hardware for both cash-strapped neighbours, who have fought three wars since independence in 1947.

## Myanmar begins writing new constitution Jan. 9

**BANGKOK, Nov 6:** Myanmar's military junta has set a date to begin writing a new constitution for a change to a civilian government in a move that opposition groups say is intended to deceive world opinion, reports AP.

The Myanmar state media, monitored in Bangkok, announced Thursday that a national convention to lay down guidelines for the constitution would begin January 9.

Myanmar's junta, internationally shunned for its appalling human rights record, seized power in September 1988 after soldiers crushed pro-democracy demonstrations by killing hundreds, perhaps thousands of people.

The Myanmar report said political and ethnic group leaders, elected members of parliament, peasants, workers, technocrats and legal experts would participate in the convention, to be held in the president's compound in Yangon.

It was unclear if the meeting would involve the National League for Democracy, the group led by Noble Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyt that easily won a general election in 1990.

The junta refused to hand over power to the League, and imprisoned scores of its leaders. It then abrogated both the country's founding 1947 civilian constitution and a 1974 socialist constitution, saying it would draft a new constitution before seating a civilian government.



NEW YORK: French movie actress Catherine Deneuve arrives at the US movie Premiere of Indochine, a film she stars in, on Thursday. The Premiere is a benefit for the group Amnesty International. —AFP/UNB photo

## Lankan army kill three LTTE men

**COLOMBO, Nov 6:** Heavily-armed soldiers broke out of their defensive positions outside the main airbase in northern Sri Lanka and overran at Tamil guerilla bunker line, killing at least three rebels, the military said today, reports AP.

Troops advanced into territory held by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) outside the Palaly Airbase Thursday, and returned to their original positions after smashing the rebel bunkers, a military spokesman said.

"We have confirmation of three terrorists getting killed. We took on the bunkers because we had a lot of harassing fire from that direction," the spokesman said, adding that three soldiers were injured during the brief battle.

He said security forces destroyed a well-fortified house used by the LTTE as a launching pad for their mortar attacks against the Palaly Airbase from its eastern end.

## Germans rally against attacks on foreigners tomorrow

**BERLIN, Nov 6:** For the first time in Germany's postwar history, its political chiefs will hold an official rally here Sunday to protest at the rising attacks on foreigners, seeking to erase an image of brute nationalism that is sowing alarm abroad, reports AP.

President Richard Von Weizsaecker, Chancellor Helmut Kohl and the speaker of the Bundestag, Rita Suessmuth, have called on citizens everywhere to join under their banner in east Berlin's historic Unter Den Linden, and not to let neo-Nazi skin-head thugs create a climate of fear.

It is the first time since the founding of the Federal Republic in 1949 that the country's leaders have felt compelled to take to the streets in order to install a sense of tolerance.

But anti-racist activists and leftwing groups are boycotting the rally, and even the Christian Social Union (CSU), the Conservative Brother Party to Kohl's Christian Democratic Union (CDU), is refusing to take part, sneering at the meeting as "fake holiness."

## Off the Record

**Like father like daughter**

**LITTLE ROCK, Ark:** Chelsea Clinton, like many 12-year-old girls likes ballet and plays a solid third base in softball. She eats macaroni and cheese and broccoli, and she giggles and dotes on her father, reports AP.

But she's not just any 12-year-old. She's the daughter of the man who was just elected the 42nd president of the United States.

President-elect Clinton, now the Arkansas governor, and his wife, Hillary, have worked hard to give their eighth-grader a normal life, despite living so close to the public eye. She attends a public school, is friends with children of not-so-famous parents and is rarely seen in a political setting.

"Her parents have made an effort to make sure she remains a teen-ager and not grow up too fast," said Bill Trice, a family friend whose son plays with Chelsea.

"She's not a snob — not what you would expect," said Lea Russ, head of the Parent-teacher Association at Mann Magnet Junior High School.

"The are very protective of her private life," said longtime friend Skip Rutherford. "The result is a very nice, very polite, very well-adjusted young woman."

Another result is that the public knows very little about Chelsea, other than what adults say about her.

She's 5-foot-2 (1.57m), wears braces and size 5 shoes. Her long curly brown hair whips from side to side when she dances with her girlfriends — "sort of a crazy slam dance," Trice said.

At last check, she wanted to be a scientist. Chelsea prefers T-shirts and jeans, but can get dressed up for the right occasions.

**Sometimes sex is a pain in the head**

**LONDON:** "Not tonight honey I'll get a headache" is more than an excuse for people who truly suffer from sex-induced headaches, doctors say, reports AP.

A new Danish study reassures those who get headaches only after orgasms that they may have a temporary problem.

The syndrome, known as benign coital headache, or orgasmic cephalgia, has been well-known among headache specialists for years. Little is known, however, about why orgasms trigger headaches or the likelihood of recurrence.

The Danish researchers' study of 26 people who suffered sex-related headaches suggests the pain eventually will stop recurring, as long as a person also does not suffer tension headaches or migraines.

The study is published in the November 6 issue of the British Medical Journal.

"If a patient with migraine or tension headache once has an episode of benign coital headache, he or she is at great risk of having recurrent attacks," said Dr John Ostergaard, an investigator at the University Hospital of Aarhus.

"Other patients, not ordinarily suffering from headache, can be reassured about the favorable prognosis of this disorder," he said.

**Royal marriage finally on the rock**

**LONDON:** Buckingham palace aides have acknowledged for the first time the marriage of heir-to-the-throne Prince Charles and Princess Diana is in trouble, British newspapers said on Friday, reports Reuter.

The reports came from correspondents of the royalty-obsessed Tabloid press who accompanied the Prince and Princess of Wales on a visit to South Korea.

The Sun quoted Charles's deputy private secretary, former diplomat Peter Westmacott, as making the "surprising comments about the royal marriage as she complained about British media coverage of the tour.

Questioned by reporters, he was quoted as saying: no, I am not saying the marriage is a happy one, but the treatment is unfair and exaggerated. They have been put under terrible pressure by the continual stories about their marital problems.

## Rawlings retains power

**ACCRA (Ghana), Nov 6:** Jerry Rawlings, a former fighter pilot who seized power in a 1981 coup, won Ghana's first presidential election in 13 years, state-run radio reported Thursday, says AP.

Opposition parties said this week's election was rigged and threatened to boycott national assembly elections in December.

Government radio said returns from 198 of 200 constituencies gave Flight Lt. Rawlings 58.6 per cent of the vote, compared to 30.2 per cent for his closest challenger, retired history professor Albert Abu Boaheh.

Three other candidates split the rest of the vote. Total vote figures were not immediately available.

## Famine, starvation inevitable in Yugoslavia this winter

**GENEVA, Nov 6:** Famine and starvation are already inevitable in former Yugoslavia this winter and many people will die from cold and exposure, Geneva conference sources warned here Thursday.

"It's already too late for saving some people," a spokesman for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (HCR), Rom Redmond, told AFP.

His warning follows that of Yugoslav conference co-chairman Cyrus Vance, who in Vienna late Wednesday admitted that it was going to be "very difficult, indeed difficult, indeed impossible to be able to meet all the humanitarian need" in the former federal state.

"I think... we are going to have casualties," Vance said. Redmond said a minimum of 9,100 tonnes per week of food aid was needed in Bosnia-Herzegovina if the population was to survive.

In the week to last Monday, barely 4,000 tonnes of food aid arrived in the republic, of which nearly 1,200 tonnes had been delivered by air-bridge and 1,840 tonnes by road from the coastal city of Split.

The deficit was accumulating by the week

and an unknown number of Bosnian refugees and displaced people were already condemned to die with the onset of winter, Redmond said.

There were currently more than three million people dependent on humanitarian aid in former Yugoslavia, he noted.

Geneva conference spokesman Fred Eckhard said he expected Bosnia to see "human suffering on a large scale."

The situation had been aggravated by the suspension of the air-bridge to Sarajevo in September following the shooting down of an Italian relief plane.

HCR officials have for the past month been urging that UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) troops be deployed more rapidly to provide security escorts for road convoys.

Redmond warned that the HCR needed several million more dollars in funds in order to achieve its objectives.

In Rome, officials of the World Food Programme said it was to ship 201,000 tonnes of food to all parts of former Yugoslavia.

Programme officials said that farm output and supply of local markets in the country was

in complete disarray. Availability of food was very difficult not just in Bosnia-Herzegovina but also in the northern and southern regions of ex-Yugoslavia.

AP adds: UN officials said they would begin monitoring a ban on military flights over Bosnia on Friday.

Meanwhile, the Red Cross said it would evacuate more than 6,000 people to Belgrade and the Croatian port of Split in a convoy of buses Friday.

But officials of the warring factions failed in a meeting Thursday to agree to open safe passage corridors in and out of the besieged capital.

In other developments Thursday, Serb and Croat militias pushed closer to the capture of the remaining government strongholds.

Bosnian army headquarters in Sarajevo said Gradacac, a government-held city near the northern border with Croatia, was attacked Thursday with heavy artillery and infantry.

It also reported Serb attacks on Tuzla, an industrial city 45 miles (72 kms) northeast of

Sarajevo, and Bihac, in the northwest, among the half-dozen cities and towns still held by the Muslim-led government.

Heavy Croat attacks were reported around Travnik, in central Bosnia.

The Bosnian government has no aircraft, and its underground forces have been losing territory everywhere, though it remains in control of most of the capital.

Ethnic Serbs have seized about 70 per cent of the country. Croats, who bolted a nominal alliance with Muslims last month, have taken much of the remaining territory, leaving the government weak and isolated.

At least 14,000 people have been killed in the war, and an additional 1 million have been forced to flee their homes.

In Geneva, Fred Eckhard, a spokesman for the UN-backed peace talks said that UN member governments had supplied data indicating that violations (of the no-fly ban) have taken place. He did not elaborate, saying only that the reports had been sent to UN headquarters for assessment.

## US Subic base closes Nov 24

**MANILA, Nov 6:** The US Pacific commander said Friday that Americans would maintain no military presence here after their last base closes this month but that training exercises and visits by warships and planes were expected to continue, reports AP.

"We will have no presence here," Adm Charles Larson told reporters during the regular review of the US-Philippine Mutual Defence Treaty. "We anticipate ship visits, aircraft transits, small unit exercises."

The Subic Bay naval base, the last US military installation on Philippine soil, is scheduled to close November 24. The Philippine Senate rejected a new, 10-year lease last year.