

Students demonstrate against sixth term for Suharto

JAKARTA, Nov 17: More than 50 students demonstrated in the Parliament building Tuesday, arguing that President Suharto has been in office too long, has abused his power and should not seek a sixth term, reports AP.

It was the first demonstration in years directly criticizing Suharto.

The students tried unsuccessfully to meet with legislators of the Indonesian Democratic Party, the only party that has not endorsed Suharto's candidacy next year for another five-year term. Suharto came to power after putting down a Communist coup attempt in September 1965.

US willing to work with Lithuanian communists

WASHINGTON, Nov 17: The United States said Monday it looked forward to working with the reform communists who won Lithuania's legislative elections and pledged to respect Democratic principles and continue a market economy, reports AP.

"We look forward to working with the new government and expand the excellent US-Lithuanian relationship," said State Department Spokesman Richard Boucher.

The Democratic Labour Party of former Communist leader Algirdas Brazauskas won 78 seats in the 141-seat parliament in Sunday's vote, according to first official returns published Monday.

They then hoisted banners with such messages as: "You've been president too long. You want you no more." "Thanks, Mr. President, we need another candidate," and "Mr Suharto restricts people's freedom."

The students stayed more than two hours on the staircase leading to the building's main hall.

"They said in a statement that 'the principle of people's sovereignty has been violated because General Suharto in fact appoints himself as president.'"

They were referring to the 500 government-appointed members in the People's Consultative Assembly, which is to elect the president next March. The other 500 members, all from Parliament, including 100 selected by the armed forces.

The statement also said that taking advantage of their fathers position, Suharto's sons and daughters control almost all business sectors. It said total assets of the family's businesses have reached at least 10 trillion rupiahs (dfls 4.8 billion).

"Even in this Parliament, people are not speaking freely," one demonstrator chanted. "This Parliament is barren."

In elections in June, the governing Golkar Party won 282 of the 400 non-appointed seats in Parliament. The Muslim United Development Party won 62 seats and the Indonesian Democratic Party 56.

Both Golkar and the Muslim Party, along with the armed forces, are backing Suharto's candidacy for another term

UNSC authorises naval blockade against Serbia

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 17: The Security Council has voted to authorize a naval blockade on the Danube River and the Adriatic coast to tighten economic sanctions on Yugoslavia. It said force could be used to back up the blockade, reports AP.

The council cited chapter 7 of the US Charter, which it has previously used to enforce embargoes and bans on international weapons trade with Iraq and Libya.

Monday's resolution prods

Bulgaria and Romania to patrol the Danube, which flows along their borders. But it wasn't immediately clear to what extent Western or other governments were willing to get involved in enforcement of the sanctions.

NATO and the European Community's Western European Union each has five frigates along the Adriatic, but they were previously not authorized to inspect vessels.

"I think we should move from surveillance to enforce-

ment," Willem van Eckelen, the Dutch secretary-general of the Western European Union, said in Helsinki earlier in the day.

The vote on the resolution was 13-0. China and Zimbabwe abstained because they felt the Serb-led government in Belgrade had no real control over the Bosnian Serbs, whose acts have been most sharply attacked by the international community.

"The Security Council must adopt firm measures to deal

with the problem," said Russian Ambassador Yuri Voronitsov. "Bosnia-Herzegovina has been devastated."

Twenty-seven nations supported the resolution, led by Islamic countries backing the Muslim-led government of Bosnia. They denounced Belgrade for fomenting war, capturing vast territories in Bosnia and Croatia, and driving out non-Serbs in a vicious "ethnic cleansing" campaign.

Serbian forces have occupied about 70 per cent of Bosnia. Most of the rest is held by Croat militias, with only Sarajevo and a few other towns still held by the Muslim-led government.

Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Jordan and other Islamic countries wanted the council to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia so it could rearm and acquire heavy weapons, but the council refused.

Yugoslav Foreign Minister Ilija Djukic said the war in Bosnia is a civil and ethnic war fought by paramilitary groups not controlled by Belgrade, and by foreign mercenaries, Muslims brought in by Islamic nations.

"Sanctions are hitting the most vulnerable part of the population" in Serbia and Montenegro, he said, including more than 300,000 Bosnian refugees.

The resolution's main thrust is to close off loopholes in the economic embargo on Serbia and Montenegro adopted May 30, and the ban on arms supplies to all the former Yugoslav republics, in force for more than a year.



A wounded Muslim soldier in Bosnia receiving treatment in a hospital. The hospital is located beyond the range of Serbian guns but recently it has come under sniper fire. — Star TV photo

Arabs, Israelis accuse each other of stalling ME talks

WASHINGTON, Nov 17: Arabs and Israelis on Monday accused each other of stalling Middle East peace talks and Syria's chief negotiator charged Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin with trying to destroy the peace process, reports Reuters.

As the latest round of Middle East talks entered its final week on an ill-tempered note, Syrian negotiator Mouwafak Al-Alal reacted angrily to an interview Rabin gave to the Washington Post.

In the interview published on Sunday, Rabin accused Syria of undermining the talks by permitting guerilla attacks against Israeli forces in South Lebanon and encouraging Palestinian opponents of peace.

"This is not something coming from someone who

wants to make peace. This is something prescribed in order to destroy the peace process," Alal said.

This public exchange of accusations is typical of this seventh round of peace talks, which began with some promise but is ending without any progress. Some analysts believe the parties may even have moved backwards.

The round opened on October 21, recessed briefly for the US presidential election on November 3 and resumed on November 9. There has been no progress since that point and both sides are accusing the other of stalling until the administration of President-elect Bill Clinton takes over on January 20.

"We feel that the Israeli delegation is not authorized or not permitted to move ahead.

Suddenly, after the second part of this round, all Israeli delegations on all tracks nearly are holding back and not permitting progress," said Alal.

But his Israeli counterpart, Itamar Rabinovich, said Syria was putting forward impossible demands for a full and unconditional Israeli withdrawal from the strategic occupied Golan Heights and not offering anything in return.

"The problem is that for the renewal of this round last Monday, the Syrians came with very pinpointed, sharply focused insistence on full withdrawal, without any willingness to elaborate on the content of peace which is a recipe for no progress," he said.

In the interview, Rabin expressed deep frustration over the lack of progress.

Iran withdraws 7 diplomats from Algeria

ALGIERS, Nov 17: Seven Iranian diplomats have been withdrawn from Algeria as part of an ongoing dispute between the two countries, Algerian newspapers reported Tuesday, says AP.

The move follows an announcement Monday by the Foreign Ministry that Algeria had decided to reduce its diplomatic presence in Iran to a "symbolic level" and asked Tehran to do likewise.

Among the Iranians leaving Algiers were Said Kacem Naamani, the military attache and cultural counselor and a friend of Iranian Prime Minister Hashemi Rafsanjani, the newspaper El Watan said.

The newspaper, which is generally accurate, reported that Naamani was the embassy's go-between with Islamic fundamentalists that the Algerian government is trying to suppress.

UK won't accept more than 170 Bosnian refugees

LONDON, Nov 17: The government defended on Tuesday its refusal to allow more than 170 Bosnian refugees who have fled civil war in their homeland into Britain, reports AP.

The Home Office denied visas to most of the group, which is in the care of a British charity on the Austria-Slovenia border, because it said they do not qualify for refugee status under an international accord.

Six Bosnians are being admitted because the government said they have family ties with people who live in Britain, and the cases of two people with medical problems are being considered.

Home Office immigration minister Charles Wardle defended the government's decision to deny visas to the others.

Ghali for free polls in Cambodia by May '93

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 17: The United Nations should continue to prepare for Cambodia's national elections even if the Khmer Rouge continues to refuse to participate, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said Monday, reports AP.

The 15,000 UN peacekeepers and 5,000 other UN officials in Cambodia will have to redeploy to concentrate on preventing cease-fire violations and monitoring the movements of the Khmer Rouge, diplomats who saw the UN chief's report said.

The peacekeepers were intended to supervise the Khmer Rouge, the Vietnamese-trained Cambodian army and two other non-Communist guerilla factions in guarded camps, where they would be disarmed.

But the Khmer Rouge have

refused to cooperate in that phase of the UN plan, which means the Security Council will have to redefine the mission of the peacekeepers. Since the guarded camps are almost empty, the peacekeepers currently have little to do.

In a report to the Security Council, the UN chief said the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) should "vigorously pursue its mandate to prepare for and hold free elections throughout the territory of Cambodia by May 1993," diplomats who have seen an early draft of the report quoted it as saying.

The Paris peace accord signed by the Khmer Rouge and other Cambodian factions last year calls for UN peacekeepers to disarm 70 per cent of the troops of the various factions

Tajik parliament fails to resolve crisis

KHOJAND, Tajikistan, Nov 17: Tajikistan's parliament failed on Monday to make progress towards ending a virtual civil war which has killed hundreds of people in the central Asian republic, reports Reuters.

"We came here to establish peace, but if they do not want us to we shall go back to Dushanbe (the capital)," said Shodmon Yusupov, head of the Tajik Democratic Party which until last week shared power with Muslim activists.

"All these deputies are communists, peasants, clan leaders, they want power," Yusupov told reporters.

The opening session of a long-awaited debate, held under tight security in the pro-communist northern Leninabad region, broke up after deputies failed to agree on the agenda.

Off the Record

Clinton loves basketball, fast driving, sandwich

WASHINGTON: Bill Clinton's loves include basketball, driving fast and peanut butter-and-banana sandwiches, say long-time friends, reports AP.

Clinton becomes American's 42nd President on January 20, and here are some of his favourite activities.

— He likes to drive fast, and doesn't just stare at the road zooming by. He tends to steer, talk, eat and search for his favourite song on the tape deck all at once. "Unnerving," said his gubernatorial press secretary, Mike Galdin.

"We need him as President because it takes him off the streets," said David Leopoullis, who's been close to Clinton since the fourth grade.

About a year ago, Clinton bought a 1966 Mustang convertible from his brother, Roger. "He can't talk to anyone without eye contact," Leopoullis says. "If you sit in the back seat, that means he's going to go off the road."

— Clinton usually reads at least three books at once, but they're not all by Nobel Prize winners. He's a sucker for page-turner mysteries and thrillers.

He often reads and holds a conversation simultaneously.

"I've always said he has two brains — one for reading and one for normal life," Galdin said.

— He loves peanut butter-and-banana sandwiches, playing the card game hearts and doing The New York Times crossword puzzle — in ink.

When he's not working, he usually wears jeans, a T-shirt, a baseball cap and running shoes. His clothes aren't fancy, he wears inexpensive brand names and a plastic digital watch.

Queen Elizabeth I love letters on auction

LONDON: A collection of letters written to Queen Elizabeth I by one of her reputed lovers is expected to sell for up to 450,000 pounds 685,000 dollar next month, auctioneers Sotheby's said on Monday, reports Reuters.

The 43 letters detail the extraordinary relationship between the Earl of Essex, Robert Devereux, and the 16th-century English monarch known as the "Virgin Queen". Elizabeth ruled for 45 years before dying, unmarried, at the age of 70.

"The letters are staggering. They are directly from him to her and are widely recognised as being among the most famous in English history," said Roy Davids of Sotheby's.



NEW YORK: US Actor Denzel Washington (L) and his wife Paulette arrive November 16 at the world premiere of the movie Malcolm X. Washington stars as Malcolm X in the film. — AFP/UNB photo

Clinton plans to lift ban on gays in Army

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS, Nov 17: President-elect Bill Clinton told reporters Monday he planned to honor his pledge to lift the ban on homosexuals in the military, but said he would first consult with leaders of the armed forces, reports AP.

"I have made a decision on a timetable, except that I want to firmly proceed and I want to do it after consulting with military leaders," Clinton said, stressing he saw the issue was two-fold.

"We know that there have always been gays in the military and we know... it cost the United States taxpayers about 500 million dollars to get fewer than 17,000 gays out of the military over the last 10 years," Clinton said.

"And so the issue, therefore, is not whether there are gays in the military; it is

whether they can be in the military without lying about it."

He spoke about issuing "a strict code of conduct which if they violate, would lead to dismissal from the service or other appropriate sanctions."

Senator Sam Nunn, Chairman of the US Armed Services Committee, on Sunday urged Clinton to go slow on his vow to lift the ban, stressing that privacy issues were a concern given the nature of life in the barracks.

Nunn's name is among those which have been put forward as a possible choice for secretary for defense under Clinton.

On Tuesday, a federal Judge ordered the Navy to reinstate petty officer Keith Meinhold — who was honorably discharged in August when he revealed he was a homosexual

Israeli choppers strike Hezbollah position

RASHAYA, Lebanon, Nov 17: Israeli helicopters on Sunday machine-gunned a Hezbollah position shelled by the Iranian-backed Hezbollah in South Lebanon, without inflicting casualties, police said, report AP.

Four cobra helicopters targeted the Shiite Muslim fundamentalist group in Berkit Jabbar and Jabbar Rashid, areas of the Bekaa valley where the Lebanese army is also deployed.

Anti-aircraft guns opened up but failed to hit the Cobras, police said, without specifying whether the army or Hezbollah returned fire. The Iranian-backed group said its fighters were responsible.

Social democrats to help Kohl reduce asylum guarantees

BONN, GERMANY, Nov 17: The opposition Social Democrats, hoping to defuse rightwing anti-foreigner sentiment, on Tuesday endorsed curtailing the generous asylum guarantees that have drawn hundreds of thousands of refugees to Germany, reports AP.

The party joined Chancellor Helmut Kohl's call for the first amendments to the asylum sections of the 1949 German constitution.

But it rejected some of Kohl's recommendations, including expelling refugees suspected of coming to Germany for economic reasons and creating a list of countries that have no political persecution.

Social Democratic support would provide the vital two-

thirds majority in parliament necessary to amend the constitution, but it could be weeks before the party reaches a compromise with Kohl's ruling



Chancellor Helmut Kohl of the Christian Democrats. The Social Democrats — who consider themselves the champions of refugees and other minorities — admitted

that the country's asylum policies are too antiquated to cope with a record influx of refugees.

Along with other mainstream parties, they worried that worsening anti-foreigner violence, and that extremist politicians would gain in 1994 federal elections if the refugee flood is not curtailed.

More than 1,600 far-right attacks, mostly against foreigners, have been reported this year. Eleven people have died.

History teaches us: Today it's (violence) against foreigners, tomorrow it's against the handicapped, and the day after it's against those who think differently," Social Democrat leader Bjorn Engholm told the convention delegates.

Nonetheless, not all the

delegates were convinced it was wise to tamper with Germany's asylum rules, which are among the most liberal in the world.

"A nation whose fascist ruler (Hitler) not so long ago exterminated minorities... will not encounter worldwide sympathy by saying that the boat is full," said delegate Michael Naumann.

The constitution's asylum clause, adopted partly in atonement for Nazi Germany's persecution of minorities, has grown into a proud symbol of German tolerance.

But with a show of hands, the vast majority of Social Democratic delegates endorsed their leaders' proposals.

Those included rejecting asylum-seekers who would not

face political persecution at home, as well as those who enter Germany from a "safe" third country, such as Austria. Many East European refugees



Bjorn Engholm, SPD Chairman enter Germany through that neighbouring country. Kohl says the Social Democrats' proposals are not drastic enough.

Japan transfers 141 Chinese boat people to warehouses

TOKYO, Nov 17: Japanese authorities transferred 141 Chinese boat people from a crowded fishing vessel to a warehouse today some three weeks after they were found drifting in waters east of Japan, officials said, reports AP.

The officials said authorities were also continuing their search for a Chinese man who jumped overboard Sunday during a clash between about 40 of the boat people and officials from Japan's Maritime Safety Agency.

Japanese authorities had been refusing to let the Chinese disembark from the vessel in Yokohama.