

## BRIEFLY

## Queen Elizabeth to visit Russia:



Queen Elizabeth II will visit Russia later this year, British Prime Minister John Major said today according to British officials travelling with him. AFP says from Nizhny-Novgorod.

The officials said the visit was agreed during talks in Moscow Tuesday between Major and Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

## Huge heroin haul in Pakistan:

Narcotics officials said Wednesday they seized 480 kilograms (1,056 pounds) of heroin worth millions of dollars, one of their biggest ever drug hauls. AP reports from Karachi.

Government agents uncovered the drugs Tuesday when they raided remote mountain hideouts near the southwestern town of Panjgur, some 400 kilometres (250 miles) northwest of Karachi.

The smugglers escaped after an hour-long shootout with the agents near the town of Panjgur, said Mohammed Omar, the regional director of Pakistan Narcotics Control Board.

## Pakistan to buy Lebanese Mirages:

Pakistan is interested in buying 10 Lebanese air force Mirage C-III jet fighters, grounded since the onset of the nation's civil war nearly 19 years ago, a Pakistani diplomat said Tuesday. AP reports from Beirut.

The Lebanese Cabinet on Monday approved the sale of the Mirages, which Beirut purchased from Paris in the 1960s. The government announcement did not say whether there were any buyers.

But Abbas Reza Kazmi, first secretary at the Pakistani Embassy in Beirut, said although Islamabad had expressed interest in buying the jets Beirut had yet to reply.

## Quake hits Tokyo:

A moderate earthquake measuring 4.1 on the Richter scale shook the Japanese capital at lunch time Wednesday but there were no reports of damage, or casualties, the meteorological agency said. AFP says from Tokyo.

The agency said the epicentre of the quake, which struck at 12:38 pm (0338 GMT), was located some 50 kilometres (31 miles) northeast of Tokyo in Ibaraki prefecture and some 70 kilometres (43 miles) underground.

A quake of 4.0 on the Richter scale, measuring the magnitude of a tremor at its epicentre, can cause moderate damage in populated areas.

## Cold kills 45 in Moscow:

The cold has killed 45 people so far this year in Moscow, most of them during the past 10 days, Interfax news agency reported Tuesday quoting the capital's Health Department. AFP reports from Moscow.

The Health Department had previously said that many of those who died had been drunk at the time.

Temperatures at the weekend in the Moscow area dropped to minus 36 centigrades (minus 34 Fahrenheit).

## Gorbachev to visit ROK:

Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev will visit South Korea next month at the invitation of retired opposition leader Kim Dae-Jung, Kim's aides said yesterday. Reuter reports from Seoul.

Gorbachev will attend a seminar sponsored by the Kim Dae-Jung peace foundation and meet political leaders during his stay from March 26 to 29, the aides said.

Kim, one of South Korea's leading dissidents for decades, retired from politics in 1992 after failing in his third bid to become president but still has many supporters in opposition.

## Aga Khan to give a talk at MIT:

The Aga Khan, spiritual leader of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, will be commencement speaker at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology May 27, the university announced, reports AP.

"His commitment to using modern resources for the betterment of his people, and his deep concern for their welfare, make him a fitting role model for those whose own careers will have similar potential," MIT President Charles M. Vest said Tuesday, when the selection was disclosed.

A Harvard graduate, the Aga Khan directs a network of philanthropic organisations. He gave 11.5 million dollars to MIT and Harvard in 1979 to establish a joint programme in Islamic architecture.

## Sudan massing troops along border to fight rebels

NAIROBI, Feb 16: Sudan's Islamic fundamentalist military government is allegedly massing child soldiers in neighbouring Zaire and the Central African republic to attack southern rebels, relief officials said Monday, reports AFP.

A major government offensive against the black and mainly Christian rebels, weekend by internal divisions, has driven more than 100,000 southerners towards the Ugandan border.

"We have had reports of a massive military buildup along the border with the Central African republic, and there are similar reports from Zaire," Michael Semmler of the German relief agency Action Africa in need told a news conference in the Kenyan capital.

Nairobi after a two-day visit to rebel-held territory in southern Sudan.

Justin Arop Yac of the relief wing of the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), said Khartoum had "bribed local officials" to turn a blind eye to the massing of Sudanese troops in remote, notoriously lawless areas of Zaire and the Central African republic bordering Sudan.

"Most of the soldiers are just young boys, aged 12 to 15," Yac told AFP. Several foreign relief agencies said they had also received persistent reports of child soldiers grouped just over the borders ready to attack the rebels from behind.

## Clinton confident of Suu Kyi's success in struggle

WASHINGTON, Feb 16: President Bill Clinton has told Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been under house arrest for four years, that he was confident her struggle for democracy would succeed, reports AFP.

"History is on the side of freedom and I remain confident that your cause will prevail," said the president in a letter he had delivered to Aung San Suu Kyi in Yangon by congressman Bill Richardson, the first outsider to be allowed to

see her since July 1989.

"We strongly condemn the effort to deny you the right to participate freely in the political life in Myanmar," Clinton told the Nobel Peace Prize winner.

He added that the recent resolutions by the UN Security Council and Human Rights Commission "make clear the international community's outrage over your continued detention as well as that of all other prisoners of conscience in Myanmar."

As the White House re-

leased details of Clinton's letter senior member of Myanmar's military rulers said in Yangon that Aung San Suu Kyi would remain under house arrest until 1995.

Deputy intelligence chief Colonel Kyaw Win told visiting Japanese reporters the security act under which Aung San Suu Kyi was held came into effect in July 1990, and the previous year of detention was considered an "arrest period."

His remarks came amid mounting speculation that the

diminutive dissident might be released on or around the fifth anniversary of her detention, next July, because Myanmar law permits house arrest for a maximum of five years.

That speculation was heightened Monday when Richardson and United Nations Development Programme resident representative in Yangon, Jehan Raheem, were allowed to visit her. Richardson paid a second visit to Aung San Suu Kyi on Tuesday before leaving Myanmar.



A family in the Old Micorayan housing estate in Kabul flees this frontline area to safer parts of the capital Feb 15. The population is experiencing a temporary lull on the 46th day of factional fighting between forces for and against President Burhanuddin Rabbani. — AFP photo

## Benazir's special envoy tells reporters in KL

## India trying to restrict Amnesty's human rights probe in Kashmir

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 16: A special envoy of Pakistan's Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto charged Tuesday that India was attempting to restrict Amnesty International's inquiries into alleged human rights violations in the strife-torn state of Kashmir, reports AFP.

Shafiqat Mahmood told reporters after talks with Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad here that India should allow a no-holds-barred human rights probe in Kashmir rather than restricting Amnesty's work on a "case-by-case" basis.

Indian Foreign Minister Dinesh Singh announced in New Delhi on Monday that Amnesty International, a London-based human rights watchdog, would be allowed to send teams to Kashmir on a "case-by-case" basis.

Amnesty had been campaigning for years for permission to probe alleged human rights violations in Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state where a separatist rebellion has left more than 8,000 people dead since 1989.

India, which holds the southern two-thirds of Kashmir, accuses Pakistan, which holds the northern third, of arming and training Muslim guerrillas seeking an end to New Delhi's rule over Kashmir.

Islamabad denies the charge but extends moral and diplomatic support to the campaign, which it describes as a legitimate struggle for self-determination.

Mahmood, a political advisor to Bhutto, said India's decision to allow Amnesty to visit Kashmir on a case-by-case basis was "an attempt to narrow down the ambit (scope) of an

inquiry that Amnesty would be allowed to conduct."

"They will say you can only go to the house of that one person, interview that one person but not anybody else. If they are really serious and want the international community to inspect Kashmir, they should not put any restrictions," he said.

Mahmood said he handed Mahathir a "long" letter from Bhutto on human rights violations in Kashmir and also held talks on a proposed resolution on the issue by Pakistan at the United Nations human rights commission in Geneva.

The resolution would ask the commission to send a fact-finding mission to investigate and compile a report on human rights abuses in Kashmir, he said.

"We may table the resolution at the current meeting of the commission or even later but are confident that all countries which respect human rights will support it," he said when asked whether predominantly-Muslim Malaysia had endorsed the resolution.

Mahmood said Pakistan was sending delegations around the globe to drum up support for the resolution.

Amnesty International, in a report released in December, denounced hundreds of disappearances in Kashmir, blaming the phenomenon on sweeping powers given to Indian security forces to crush the insurgency.

India and Pakistan have fought two of their three wars since independence over Kashmir.

## India to conduct 3rd test flight of 'Agni' Saturday

NEW DELHI, Feb 16: India is to conduct the third test flight of an indigenous intermediate-range ballistic missile on Saturday, the Press Trust of India reported today, says AFP.

The news agency, citing unidentified official sources, said the test-firing of the missile known as "Agni," or "fire" in Sanskrit, would be held at a test range in the eastern state of Orissa.

The third test flight of the 75-tonne rocket had been scheduled for January 7 but was postponed by scientists of the defence research and development organisation at the last-minute because of unspecified technical problems.

The Agni was first tested in May 1989 and in May 1992. The first test was considered a

success but the second was a failure due to a problem during the re-entry stage.

The Agni, with a range of 2,500 kilometres can carry a nuclear or conventional warhead or place a satellite into orbit.

The United States and other countries have repeatedly expressed concern about India's missile programme and Washington put pressure on Russia last year to cancel a deal to sell Cryogenic rocket engines to India.

Besides the intermediate-range Agni, Indian scientists are also conducting research into Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles and they have developed both short-range and surface-to-air missiles.

## Hekmatyar group to block aid convoys to Kabul

ISLAMABAD, Feb 16: The Hezb-i-Islami faction of Afghan Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar has decided to block humanitarian aid convoys to parts of Kabul controlled by its opponents, sources said Tuesday, reports AFP.

Ustad Saeed, who represents the Hezb in Peshawar, Pakistan, said no convoy would be allowed "to travel to military bases," but three markets had been opened for civilians in those parts of the capital controlled by the faction or its allies.

The decision to stop aid going to areas controlled by former Defence Minister Ahmed Shah Masood, follows a warning by the United Nations that some 200,000 people in the capital face famine after weeks of fighting.

Saeed said the move came after accusations that supplies recently brought in by a International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) convoy were distributed to Masood troops.

## No-confidence motion against NWFP govt

PESHAWAR, Feb 16: The ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP) tabled a no-confidence motion today against the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) government, reports AFP.

The resolution was moved at a special session of the NWFP assembly convened here on a request from the PPP, which is in opposition in the province.

Speaker of the house, Hidayatullah Khan Chamkanai, admitting the motion against provincial Chief Minister Sahabzada Sabir Shah, set the debate and vote for February 23.

Security was tight as the administration banned carrying weapons and holding rallies and public meetings in the city.

## Jackson found innocent of stealing "Dangerous"

DENVER, Colorado, Feb 16: Star Michael Jackson was found innocent Tuesday of stealing his hit song "Dangerous" from song writer Crystal Cartier, reports AFP.

An eight-member jury took three and one-half hours to decide to reject the Denver song writer's allegation that Jackson pirated her version of "Dangerous," and spun it into an international hit in 1992.

It was the second time in only months that Jackson was exonerated by a jury on charges he had pirated other artists' work. Late last year, a Los Angeles jury ruled that he had not stolen parts of "We are the world." "The girl is mine," and "triller."

## Japan welcomes DPRK for allowing IAEA inspections

TOKYO, Feb 16: Japan, welcoming North Korea's decision to allow international inspections of its nuclear sites, called on the hardline communist state today to open suspected secret facilities as well, reports AFP.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Masayoshi Takemura told a press conference that "inspections of nuclear materials at undeclared facilities will be necessary" to dispel suspicions that North Korea was building nuclear bombs.

Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa told Japanese reporters at the parliament building that the agreement looked "alright for the moment." "But there are a couple

more sites left," he was quoted as saying.

After months of talks, North Korea agreed on Tuesday to open seven of its declared nuclear facilities to inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), an action seen as necessary to avert UN sanctions.

But the UN-affiliated agency has also been seeking to check two undeclared sites which it said were suspected of hiding weapons-grade nuclear materials.

North Korea has rejected the request, saying these undeclared sites at Yongbyon, 90 kilometres (60 miles) north of Pyongyang, were non-unclear military installations.

## Off the Record

## Deng a big drinker

BEIJING: Deng Xiaoping drank excessive amounts of alcohol during his youth, his son Deng Pufang was quoted as saying in the Shanghai Wen Hui Bao newspaper Wednesday, reports AFP.

During a meal, washed down with plenty of wine, in the Shanghai home of film maker Xie Jin, Deng Pufang said he had inherited a taste for alcohol from his father.

The elder Deng was "a big drinker when he was young," his son was quoted as saying.

Deng Pufang also said his father "is presently in good health," adding that the "would like to spend Chinese New Year in Hong Kong after 1997," when Beijing will have regained control over the British colony.

Deng Xiaoping, accompanied by his son, was in Shanghai last week to celebrate the lunar new year.

The elder Chinese statesman appeared on Chinese television February 9, for his first public appearance in a year, but seemed weak and with constant support from two of his daughters.

## Egypt recruiting mummies of Pharaohs to attract tourists

CAIRO: Egypt is recruiting 4,500-year-old mummies of Pharaohs to attract tourists scared away by Muslim militant attacks, reports Reuter.

Eleven mummies, ordered locked away by the late President Anwar Sadat in 1980, go on display at the Egyptian museum in Cairo from March 1.

Abdelhalim Nouredin, Chairman of the Egyptian Antiquities Organisation, told Reuters on Tuesday: "The mummies are now in a very good condition that will allow us to exhibit them... I hope they will attract tourists to come to see the mummies of those Pharaohs, the great people who achieved this great culture."

Sadat banned the popular exhibition of mummies that first opened in 1946, saying it was morally improper to display the bodies of Pharaohs whose dignity should be preserved.

Nouredin said the mummies to be displayed, some of them more than 4,500 years old, would include Tuthmosis, Amonhotib first, Sakin raa' and the famous king Ramses II.

## Hunter trapped in well for eight days

TOKYO: A 61-year-old hunter, trapped in a dried-up well for eight days, survived the Tokyo area's worst snowstorm in a quarter century, police said on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

The hunter fell into the well while bird hunting on February 7, five days before the blizzard struck and killed at least 10 people.

A police spokesman in Imaichi, 120 km (75 miles) north of Tokyo, said Yoshiji Anzai was pulled from the well on Tuesday after someone heard his calls for help.

"We believe he lived because he starved off hunger by eating snow and because he was wearing a heavy-duty hunting suit," the spokesman said.

After falling into the 5.3 metre (17 ft) deep well, Anzai fired a number of shots from his rifle but no one heard them.

## 'You better be awful lucky'

TULSA, Okla: A fast-food restaurant employee angry that a manager asked him to start work early opened fire Tuesday, wounding the boss and five other people during the lunch rush, officials said, reports AP.

Marcus Muriel Thompson, 26, walked out of Wendy's Old Fashioned Hamburgers as the first police cruisers arrived and surrendered.

"We were at a back table and didn't get to get out," said high school student Jenny Edwards. "He started shooting all my friends. And then he came to me and held the gun right in my face. And he said you better be awful lucky."

The gunman, armed with a .380-caliber handgun, asked her if she believed in God. "I said yes. He said 'The clip is out,'" Edwards told radio station KVOO. "And then he started running toward the front."

## Camel held for smuggling

NEW DELHI: An Indian camel has been locked up after it was caught trying to smuggle illicit liquor into New Delhi, the Pioneer daily said Wednesday, reports Reuter.

The newspaper said police laid a trap on February 2 after a tip that the camel's driver was transporting liquor illegally into the capital from neighbouring Haryana state. The driver escaped but the camel was caught with 40 bottles.

The animal was taken into custody and has not yet been reclaimed by its owner, who hired it to the smuggler.

The Pioneer, which carried a picture of the camel peering over a padlocked gate, said the animal was being held at a disused municipal cattle pond with scant and irregular food. Its future was unclear.

## Vanuatu fails to elect president

PORT VILA, Feb 16: Vanuatu failed to elect a president today, for the second time in a week, due to a lack of sufficient votes for any one candidate, reports AFP.

None of the eight candidates attracted the minimum 36 votes required from the 56-member electoral college. All 28 members of the governing union of moderate parties voted for Anglican priest Father Luc Dini, a former minister in the transitional government which led this island state to independence on July 30, 1980.

However, 18 opposition members voted for father John Bernard Bani, another Anglican priest and a former director of youth and sports when the main opposition Vanuatu Pati was in government.

Ten votes were declared void. They are thought to be from the so-called "Independent opposition".

## Koirala plans to dissolve parliament Nepali CP seeks Birendra's help to stall PM's move

KATHMANDU, Feb 16: Nepal's main political opposition party has appealed to King Birendra to call an emergency session of parliament in a bid to stall the Prime Minister's plans to dissolve the legislative body, a party source said Tuesday, reports AFP.

The Nepal Communist Party-United Marxist and Leninist (NCP-UML) has appealed to the King in a letter signed by 25 per cent of its MPs.

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala hopes his ruling Nepali Congress (NC) will win a comfortable majority if mid-term polls are held, an NC source said.

The NCP (UML) in its letter maintained that the monarch should not dissolve parliament

more than two years before its term expires nor should he call for mid-term polls on the advice of the prime minister alone.

"We think sensitive national issues like the dissolution of parliament and calling of the mid-term polls should be publicly debated in parliament itself before Koirala advises the King," the communist source said.

The King in the meantime is believed to have asked Koirala if he enjoys support for his plan from his parliamentary party.

Koirala Tuesday held a meeting of NC MPs at his residence but more than 50 parliamentarians, who support party president Krishan Prasad

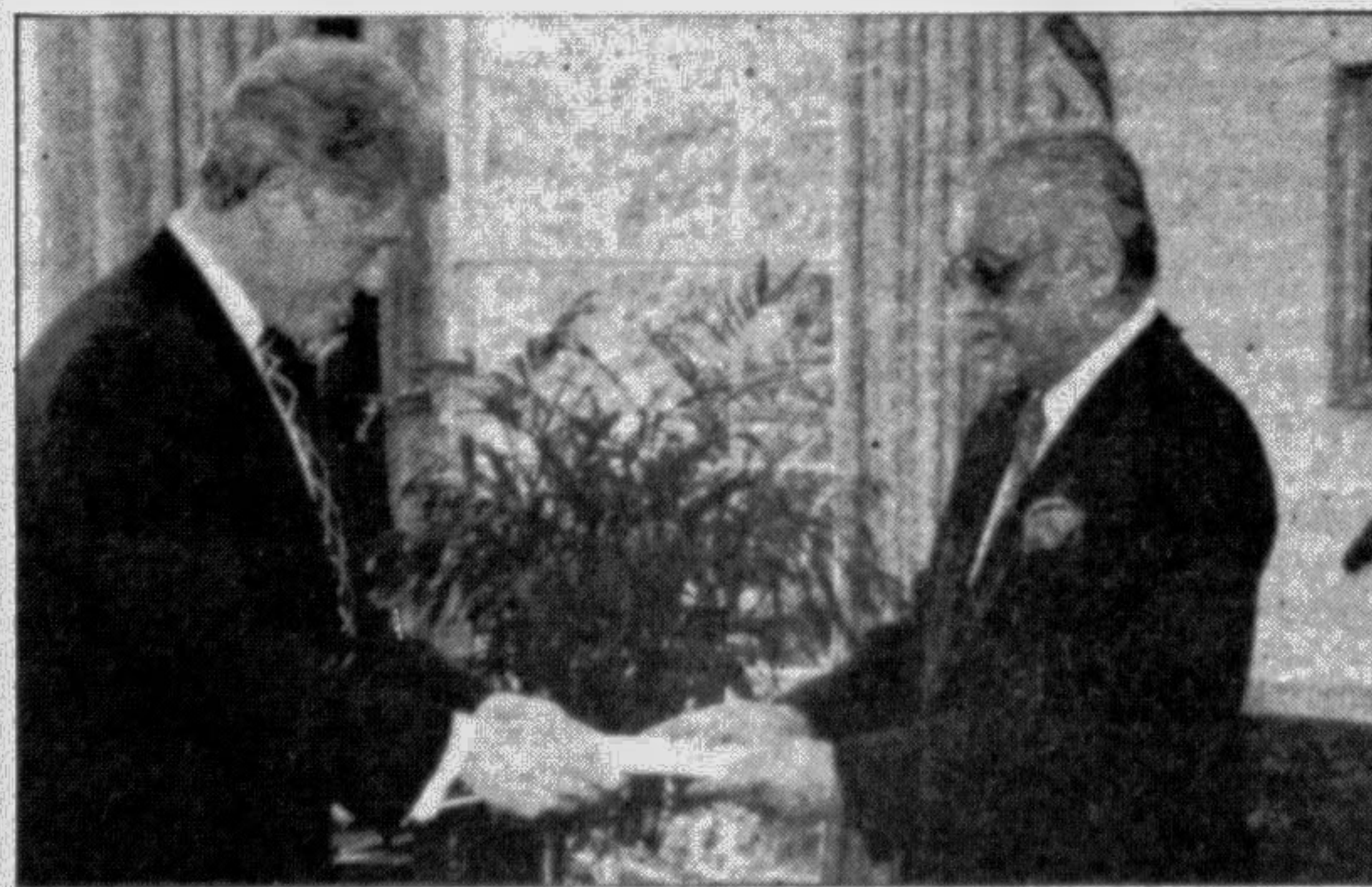
Bhattarai and supreme leader of the NC Ganesh Man Singh, stayed away.

They will however, be attending at crucial meeting of the NC Central Working Committee (NCCWC) Wednesday at Singh's residence to decide the fate of the Prime Minister.

Pro-democracy students, NC MPs and party activists turned against Koirala after Bhattarai's defeat earlier this month in a by-election.

They blamed a statement by Koirala critical of Bhattarai for the polls defeat.

A source close to the Koirala camp said party MPs have suggested not holding mid-term polls and have called for unity between Singh, Bhattarai and Koirala.



US President Bill Clinton (L) receives the credentials of Humayun Kabir, the new ambassador from Bangladesh in White House Feb 14.

## Christopher to visit several Asian countries

WASHINGTON, Feb 16: US Secretary of State Warren Christopher is considering visiting several Asian countries next month after a scheduled trip to Australia, administration officials said yesterday, reports Reuter.

Christopher is due to take part in bilateral security talks in Australia March 8-9 and the officials said he might then spend a further five or six days in Asia.

Among the stops believed to be under consideration are Indonesia, China, Japan and Vietnam, although officials say no decisions have been made.

Officials said last month Christopher might visit China after he met Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen in Paris.

The United States is threatening not to renew China's most favoured nation trading status in June.