

## BRIEFLY

**11 climbers missing in Nepal:** A team of 11 climbers — nine Germans, a Swiss and a Sherpa guide — is missing in the Nepalese Himalayas, the German embassy said in Kathmandu yesterday. Reuter reports from Kathmandu.

The team set off to climb the 6,091-metre (19,980-foot) Pisang mountain near the huge Annapurna range on Sunday and was to report back that evening. German embassy attache Anke Wagner told Reuters.

**7 more executed in China:** Seven criminals have been executed in the Chinese cities of Shanghai and Guanzhou for crimes including murder, rape and theft, reports said, according to AFP from Beijing.

Three were executed on Wednesday in the southern city of Guangzhou, including Li Lun, 37, who was found guilty of murdering seven people and seriously injuring one, raping one woman and stealing, the Yangcheng Evening News said.

**Ecuador's army chief, 9 others die:** The head of Ecuador's army, General Miguel Irujale, died on Wednesday night along with nine other officers when his helicopter crashed in the jungle, an army spokesman said. Reuter reports from Quito.

Army Colonel Alberto Molina said eight people survived the accident. "We don't have all the details at this time, but we understand bad weather was the cause of the accident...we have recovered the body of General Irujale and those injured are being flown to Quito," Molina said.

**Egyptian leader shot dead:** Anti-terrorist police killed the new leader of the outlawed Jamaa Islamiyya's armed wing, Ahmed Hassan Abdel Gall, in a raid on his desert hideout in southern Egypt, the Interior Ministry announced yesterday. AFP reports from Cairo.

He was shot when the police came under fire as they moved in to arrest him near Aswan in an operation carried out during the last several days, the ministry said, without giving an exact date.

**Chinese dissident jailed:** Chinese authorities have sentenced another dissident to three years in a labour camp, the latest in a growing list of dissidents sentenced this year without trial, his wife was reported on Thursday as saying. AP reports from Hong Kong.

Lu Honglai, who already had been jailed in 1981 for publishing underground pro-democracy magazines, was sentenced last month for emigrating illegally, his wife, Li Jiyun, told the newspaper Eastern Express.

**Illiteracy problem for China:** More women are educated in China now, but the problem of illiteracy remains a major problem, a newspaper reported yesterday. AFP says from Shanghai.

The Wen Hui daily reported that 96.9 per cent of girls aged 7 to 11 go to school, while the number of female students in colleges and universities totals 852,000 — 30.87 times more than in 1947.

**Indian rockets ready for trials:** India has developed a surface-to-surface artillery rocket system which is ready for trials, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said on Wednesday. AFP reports from New Delhi.

The system can fire 12 rockets in less than 40 seconds and has a range of 40 kilometres (25 miles), the news agency quoted sources at the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) as saying.

**UN accused of torturing Iraqis:** Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad, known for his outspoken ways, accused the United Nations Wednesday of torturing Iraqis by maintaining an economic embargo against Baghdad. AP reports from Kuala Lumpur.

He said the West may feel that President Saddam Hussein of Iraq is oppressing his people. But the United Nations also is "oppressing, forcing and torturing" the Iraqis just because the West has been unable to bring down the Iraqi Government, he added.

**Polls held in Sikkim, Goa:** Sikkim and Goa, two of India's smallest states voted on Wednesday in the first of a series of regional polls likely to provide a pointer to general elections due in March 1996. Reuter reports from New Delhi.

Sikkim, on the flanks of the Himalayas, and Goa, a lush vacation area of tropical beaches, are both ruled by Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's Congress Party.

**6 Sikhs tortured to death:** Six Sikh militants previously reported to have died while trying to escape from a high-security prison in north India were actually tortured to death for protesting corruption in jail, a daily alleged on Wednesday. AFP reports from New Delhi.

The Telegraph said the six rebels, reportedly shot dead during a jailbreak in Pilibhit, in the state of Uttar Pradesh, were killed by guards for raising the issue of vengal wars.

**Pak-Russia talks Nov 27:** A Russian delegation is planning to visit Pakistan on November 27 for preliminary talks on selling Sukhoi Su-27 combat planes to Islamabad, Pakistani sources said on Wednesday. AFP reports from Islamabad.

The talks could mark a change in policy with Russia pursuing procurement talks with the Pakistani air force despite Moscow's traditionally stronger relations with New Delhi.

**US may sell jets to L America:** US Defence Secretary William Perry on Wednesday opened the door to a possible sale of advanced fighter jets to Latin America and said he will discuss the sale of tanks to Brazil and missiles to Argentina this week. Reuter reports from Marana.

Perry made a brief refueling stop at this Amazon jungle city in northwestern Brazil at the start of a six-day South American trip to improve US military ties with Brazil and Argentina.

**'How We Die' wins US Book Award:** A meditation on death won the non-fiction prize at the US National Book Awards on Wednesday, beating out four other finalists, including a controversial new book about US Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. AP reports from New York.

The winning book was "How We Die: Reflections on Life's Final Chapter," by Sherwin B Nuland. William Gaddis won his second fiction award for "A Frolic of His Own," and James Tate won the poetry award for the "Worshipful Company of Fletcher's."

## Rapid growth in Indo-Israeli ties

JERUSALEM, Nov 17: Israel is basking in the rapid growth of ties with India which are unparalleled between the Jewish state and an Asian country in the last three decades, officials said today. reports AFP

The comments came after a four-day visit by the highest-ranking Indian delegation to Israel.

Relations with New Delhi are now "the warmest with any Asian country since the heyday of relations with Myanmar," said one senior official, recalling the 1990s.

"The climate between the two peoples is very conducive for cooperation," Shivraj Patil, the speaker in India's lower house of parliament, told reporters before leaving for home today.

## First ever move to educate Indian troops about human rights

TEKANPUR, India, Nov 17: Deep inside the bandit country and next to a 70-year-old castle of a former Maharaja overlooking a lake with crocodiles, Indian paramilitary troops on Wednesday heard what they normally don't hear: respect human rights, reports AP.

The Geneva-based International Committee of the Red Cross was face-to-face with the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) in a first ever move to educate them about human rights.

The BSF soldiers, who are battling Muslim secessionists in Kashmir and combatting half a dozen insurgencies across the country, have been widely criticised internationally for firing on unarmed civilians, shabby treatment of prisoners and raping women dur-

## Bosnian govt seeks UN, NATO protection

SARAJEVO, Nov 17: Renegade Muslims allied with Serbs surrounded a government-held town in northwest Bosnia, the United Nations said today. Bosnian government officials appealed for UN and NATO protection, reports AP.

UN officials said Muslims loyal to former warlord Fikret Abdic crossed from their refuge in neighbouring Croatia and joined a Bosnian Serb offensive against government forces in the complicated northwest corner of Bosnia.

UN spokesman L. Col. Tim Spicer said the Muslim renegades had advanced several kilometers (miles) and were surrounding the town of Velika Kladusa, Abdic's former stronghold.

They still have not captured it," Spicer said. "Heavy fighting is ongoing."

Shelling also was heard on Thursday morning from the suburbs southwest of the capital, Sarajevo, where government soldiers and besieging Bosnian Serbs have exchanged heavy mortar fire in recent weeks.

Spicer said Serbs fired three mortar rounds from the suburb of Ilidza in violation of a ban on such weapons around Sarajevo.

The Bosnian army booted Abdic and his troops from the

northwest corner of Bosnia, known as the Bihac pocket, in August. Last month, the Bosnian army broke out of the Bihac pocket to the south and east and drove into Serb-held territory.

They were unable to hold their gains, and fighting continues as government soldiers attempt to stabilise their lines.

Bosnian government officials on Thursday appealed for UN and NATO intervention in an apparent bid to bolster their troops positions.

Bihac is among six "safe areas" declared by the United Nations in 1993, and NATO could be asked to launch airstrikes to protect it.

President Alija Izetbegovic urged the UN Security Council to take immediate action to halt a "massive attack" on the Bihac region by Serbs from Bosnia and Croatia, and Abdic's forces.

Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic urged that the United Nations declare Bihac an area free of all heavy weapons.

Jadranko Prlic, defence minister of a new federation of Bosnian Croats and Muslims, said the Muslim-led Bosnian government army and Bosnian Croat militias could hold the lines around Bihac.

But he demanded the United Nations allow Croatia to

retaliate against any attacks from Serb-held territory on the Bihac defenders.

UN officials in Sarajevo said privately that it appeared the government was eager for UN and NATO action against the Serbs before its army loses its last positions on strategic high ground on the Grabez plateau northeast of Bihac.

Another UN spokesman,

Maj. Herve Gourmelon, reported about 100 artillery and mortar rounds in and around Velika Kladusa. He reported heavy concentrations of government troops there, indicating that it probably would not be abandoned without a bitter fight.

Gourmelon also reported heavy fighting on Wednesday and overnight on the Grabez

plateau, but said the United Nations had no reports of any shifts in the front lines.

War broke out in Bosnia in April 1992 when minority Serbs rebelled against a vote by Muslims and Croats to leave Serb-led Yugoslavia. An estimated 200,000 people are dead or missing, and Serbs control about 70 per cent of the republic.



A French UN soldier inspects the area around Krupac, a Bosnian-Serb held village in the demilitarised zone (DMZ) on Mount Igman on Wednesday. — AFP photo

## Pak students on hunger strike to protest quota system

KARACHI, Nov 17: Several students were hospitalised today on the fifth day of a hunger strike against the admission policy of medical colleges in southern Sindh Province, reports AFP.

The condition of some of the 45 hunger strikers has deteriorated, doctors said. The group includes 33 female students, most of them in their late teens.

The protesting students passed their pre-medical examinations with distinction, but could not obtain admission to medical colleges because of a quota system that reserves a certain number of seats in colleges for non-urban applicants.

One of the hospitalised women, Rizwana Niaz, told AFP that the admission policy under the quota system was depriving qualified Karachi students from getting admission

to colleges in their own city, where almost all major professional colleges are state-run.

Under the existing quota policy, a student from rural Sindh gets preference over urban-based students, even with lower grades.

The hunger strikers have set up a makeshift camp in the heart of the city where a few are receiving intravenous glucose. All of them are now showing the strain of their vigil.

## Yeltsin's Press Secy resigns

MOSCOW, Nov 17: Russian President Boris Yeltsin's chief press aide, Vyacheslav Kostikov, announced today that he had resigned at the request of the Kremlin leader, reports Reuter.

## Lanka plans sweeping changes in army

COLOMBO, Nov 17: Sri Lanka's new government plans sweeping changes in the country's military system, with President Chandrika Kumaratunga assuming the post of defence minister, official sources here said yesterday, reports AFP.

Kumaratunga was likely to appoint as secretary to the Defence Ministry, a senior civil servant, deviating from the usual practice of giving the top job to a retired military officer, the sources said.

"There is going to be a cleanup, even the structure of the organisation might change. The government thinks it is better to have a professional administrator rather than a retired general running the show," the source said.

The defence establishment in the country has been plagued by allegations of kickbacks in purchasing equipment, weapons and ammunition to fight separatist Tamil Tiger guerrillas in the island's northeast.

Information Minister Dharmasiri Senanayake declined comment on reports that the present Defence Secretary, Hamilton Wanasinghe, a retired five-star general, was to be replaced shortly.

"Yes, some changes will be made, but I cannot confirm or deny if General Wanasinghe or the IGP (Inspector General of Police Frank de Silva) will be

removed," Senanayake told reporters after yesterday's cabinet meeting.

Kumaratunga, who became president as well as the commander-in-chief of the armed forces on Saturday, has been critical of the military high command and has described military leaders as a "government unto themselves."

"The previous government did not have sufficient control over its armies."

"As you know, most armies prefer war to peace. Not the soldiers at the base, but those who are in Colombo at the top," Kumaratunga said in a recent interview.

## Delhi urged to stop arms shipment to LTTE

COLOMBO, Nov 17: Sri Lanka has asked neighbouring India to intercept a suspected arms shipment to the island's separatist Tamil Tiger guerrillas, official sources here said yesterday, reports AFP.

The consignment, believed to be 10 tonnes of arms and explosives, was coming from an undisclosed Black Sea port for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the sources quoted a National Intelligence Bureau (NIB) report as saying.

## Former KGB spy Rupp jailed

DUESSELDORF, Germany, Nov 17: Rainer Rupp, the former KGB spy who gave away more secrets than any other convicted West German traitor, was sentenced on Monday to 12 years in prison, reports AP.

Rupp, known by the code-name "Topaz," had admitted handing over NATO alliance strategies, codes and military preparedness plans to his East German communist handlers while working at NATO headquarters in Brussels. He was given a year in prison for every year he spied — from 1977 to 1989, when he was arrested.

His wife, British-born Ann-Christin, received a 22-month suspended prison sentence for aiding Rupp in his espionage under the code-name "Turquoise."

The prosecution had asked for a 15-year sentence for Rupp, who confessed immediately after his arrest in the summer of 1993.

## Off the Record

## Exercise is like money!

DALLAS: It's true that a regular stroll in the park can make your heart healthier. But the latest evidence suggests that exercise is like money — the more you get, the better, reports AP.

In the first study of the heart-disease risks of a large group of serious runners, researchers found that the benefits of exercise continue to climb even at the most intense levels of exercise.

Runners who logged 40 miles (64 kilometers) a week, for example, had a lower heart disease risk than runners who covered 30 miles (48 kilometers) a week.

Current US government guidelines emphasize moderate exercise for sedentary people but don't emphasize the continued benefits for more serious exercise enthusiasts.

As a result, some serious exercisers may be discouraged from continuing, believing they are not getting any additional benefits, said the study's author, Paul Williams, a researcher at the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory in Berkeley, California.

He discussed the findings Wednesday at the annual meeting of the American Heart Association.

## Jacqueline's "on-again off-again affair"

NEW YORK: Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and her brother-in-law Robert F Kennedy became lovers after President Kennedy's assassination in, according to an author whose sensational biographies have been criticised as inaccurate reports AP.

In an updated edition of his 1989 "A Woman Named Jackie," C David Heymann describes her relationship with Robert Kennedy as an "on-again, off-again affair."

It began after Robert Kennedy moved from Washington to New York the year after his brother's slaying in 1963 and lasted until his own assassination in 1968, the book says.

During that time, Robert Kennedy was married. The president's widow married Aristotle Onassis in October 1968 four months after Robert Kennedy's death.

The books cited as sources Robert Kennedy's chauffeur, a woman who said she saw the pair emerging from a hotel room in 1965 and a socialite who nodded "yes" to whether the two spent nights together at her home in Jamaica in 1966. None of the sources were identified by name.

Heymann also suggests that Mrs Onassis hastened her own death with morphine and Seconal rather than continue fighting an untreatable cancer.

Mrs Onassis, who died at home May 19, had signed a living will asking that no extraordinary measures be taken to extend her life.

Nancy Tuckerman, a friend who frequently spoke for Mrs Onassis, declined to comment Wednesday on the book.

## ... for comparing her weight to a baby elephant

SELLERSVILLE: A woman once recognised as the world's fattest by the Guinness Book of Records is suing a tabloid over a story that compared her weight to a baby elephant and a small family car, reports AP.

Rosalie Bradford, who weighed almost 1,200 pounds (540 kilograms) when she was her heaviest, claims the September 7, 1993, story cast her as a "thing" or "animal" to be despised for pitted.

She and her husband, Robert, are seeking 1 million dollars from Enquirer-Star Inc of Florida, claiming libel and invasion of privacy.

Enquirer-Star spokesman Iala Calder said Wednesday, "I am not aware of the lawsuit and can't comment."

Bradford said she was not interviewed for the story and the tabloid made up all her quotes, including "Even going to the bathroom was a nightmare. I had a commode by the bed and Bob would haul me into a sitting position and then manoeuvre me toward it inch by inch."

Not only was she listed as the heaviest person alive by Guinness, but she also was cited for the greatest recorded weight loss for a woman.

Bradford weighed 1,050 pounds (472.5 kilograms) in January 1987, then slimmed to 314 pounds (141 kilograms) by September 1992.

## Dalai Lama hopeful of getting back Tibet

NEW DELHI, Nov 17: The Dalai Lama, whose 60th birthday celebrations according to the Tibetan calendar were held Thursday, said he is optimistic about getting back his Himalayan homeland, reports AP.

Although the Dalai Lama's birthday falls on July 6, 1995, Tibetan mystic practices call for yearlong prayers when a high monk completes 59 years. The day was considered auspicious in the Year of the Dog, as the current year is known in Tibetan calendar.

For more than three decades, the spiritual leader of millions of Buddhists has been trying in vain to pressure the Chinese government to grant autonomy to his homeland.

During the last one year, India has allowed Western diplomats to visit Jammu-Kashmir as part of an attempt to appear more transparent and said created a National Human Rights Commission to punish government troops.

In recent years, India's main human rights concerns have been: prisoners, torture and unwarranted killings in trying to suppress a rebellion by Muslim separatists. Jammu-Kashmir is the only Muslim-majority state in predominantly Hindu India. More than 9,500 people, mostly civilians, have been killed since the insurgency began in 1989.

— Punjab, where 18,000 people have been killed since 1982 when Sikh rebels began fighting to set up an independent homeland. The death toll

has dropped drastically in 1994, but there are frequent reports of human rights violations. Human rights groups say captured rebels were executed in custody without trial. Many more were shot during gun-battles in villages and fields.

— In southern India, there has been allegations of human rights abuses in Andhra Pradesh state where human rights activists are investigating allegations that 496 alleged members of the outlawed leftist Peoples War Group have been killed in staged confrontations between 1991 and 1994.

— In the remote northeast, Indian troops, fighting three other separatists campaigns, face charges of human rights violations

matched by decisive measures to halt human rights violations, and this the government has failed to do," the London-based Amnesty International said in a statement faxed to The Associated Press.

"It is a very important interaction for safeguarding human rights," said Ralph Crawshaw, an ICRC official and a retired British police officer. He was one of the trainers at a 3-day workshop attended by 22 commanders of the BSF, which has 171,000 soldiers with arms.

"At least we are talking and I must say I am impressed by the interest shown by the BSF to ensure that its reputation as a fighting force is not tarnished," Crawshaw 54 said.

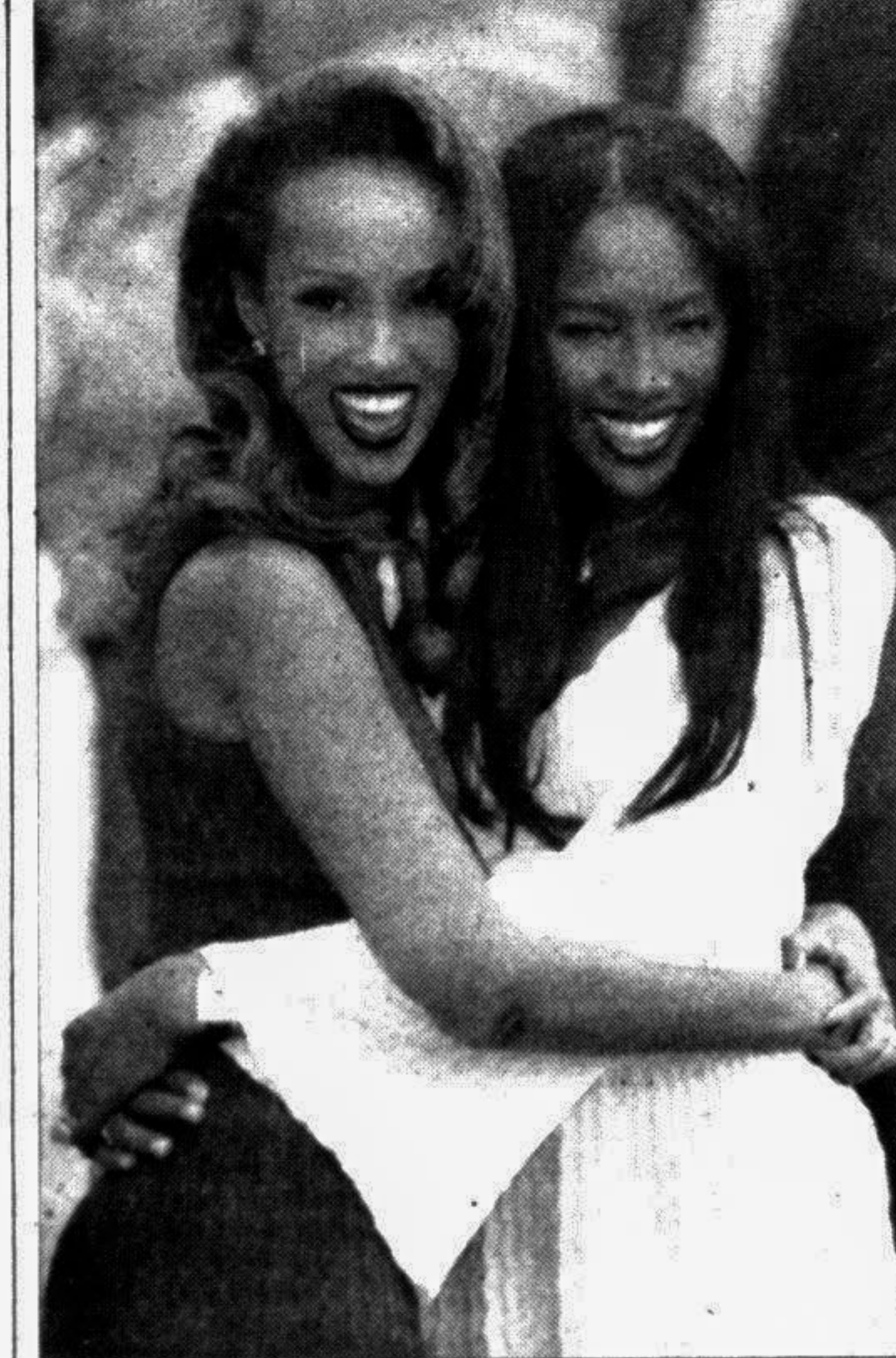
An he spoke, the BSF officers sat in circle in the castle which was built by the former rulers of Gwalior state adjacent to a lake where they breed crocodiles. Some of the officers munched cashewnuts and debated what the seminar is all about.

"I tell my men that we have to demonstrate that we have the power to crush militancy but with a human face," said BSF chief Daya Kishore Arya.

The ICRC plans to extend Wednesday's interactions to more areas in India.

"I hope this is the beginning," said David Delapraz, ICRC's South Asia chief.

Increasing criticism of its human rights record at international meetings had prompted the Indian government to open its doors to the ICRC.



Miss World celebrities, Somali-born Iman (L) and Britain's Naomi Campbell embrace at Sun City on Tuesday before the final tomorrow. They are here as part of the judges panel. — AFP photo