

BRIEFLY

Kumaratunga to visit India: President Chandrika Kumaratunga will visit New Delhi in April next year to attend the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit scheduled to be held there, PTI reports from Colombo.

Kumaratunga conveyed this to the SAARC Secretary General Y K Silwal who called on her here on Tuesday, a spokesman of the president's office said.

6 executed in China: Six people convicted of violent and 'grave crimes' have been executed in Beijing, an official report said Wednesday, AP reports from Beijing.

Among the six was Ma Hongyan, convicted of following young girls — latchkey children — to their homes after school and raping them and then robbing the apartments, the newspaper Beijing Evening News reported. All six were executed after receiving the death sentence from the Beijing Intermediate Court, the report said.

Pakistan expels 4000 foreigners: Pakistan has so far expelled 4,000 foreign nationals who had moved to the country after fighting in the Afghanistan conflict. Law and Justice Minister Iqbal Haider said on Tuesday, AFP reports from Islamabad.

He said the government extraditions arose from its commitment to curb terrorism, the official Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) quoted the minister as saying in a speech at the Institute of Strategic Studies.

6 Colombian kids killed daily: Six children are murdered in Colombia each day, many at the hands of state police or the military, an international human rights group charged Tuesday, AP reports from Bogota.

"Colombia is a world leader in the killing of its own children," said Michelle Morris-Baird, legal adviser to Human Rights Watch/Americas. "Children are in serious danger because of state-sponsored or state-tolerated violence directed against them."

One lakh Liberians in Ivory Coast: More than 100,000 Liberians have taken refuge in Ivory Coast since mid-September following an upsurge in fighting between rival groups in eastern Liberia, a UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) spokesman said there Tuesday, AFP reports from Abidjan.

A total of 336,807 Liberians have fled to the Ivory Coast in the face of the civil war, which broke out in December 1989, Abdou-Raouf Issaka told AFP.

30 prisoners die in Venezuela: Thirty inmates were killed on Tuesday when a tunnel, dug by more than 100 prisoners seeking to escape from the Tocuyito penitentiary center in Valencia, collapsed, Xinhua reports from Caracas.

The tunnel linked cell block No. 2 with the sewer system outside the jail in Venezuela's second-largest city.

13 killed in Gaza in Nov: The death toll from clashes in Gaza this month between Palestinian police and demonstrators rose to 13 yesterday when a 14-year-old boy died of his wounds, Reuter reports from Gaza.

Sources at Ramallah general hospital in the occupied West Bank said Alaa Al-Halabi died from wounds suffered during the clashes on November 18, which started when Palestinian police stepped in to prevent a march led by the Muslim group Hamas.

8 hurt in Taiwan violence: Six supporters of a Nationalist Party candidate were arrested for attacking a rival's supporters with clubs and knives, injuring eight people, police said on Wednesday, AP reports from Taipei.

The Tuesday night attack was the latest violence to mar the run-up to elections that will be held on Saturday. Taiwanese will elect a provincial governor for the first time ever and mayors for Taipei and the southern city of Kaohsiung for the first time since 1967 and 1979 respectively.

12000 children have AIDS in Brazil: About 12,000 children in Brazil have been infected with the AIDS virus, according to Health Ministry statistics released at the second National Conference on Paediatric AIDS, being held in Sao Paulo, Xinhua reports from Rio de Janeiro.

According to the Health Ministry, the number of children infected by AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is soaring.

UNSC renews UNDOF: The Security Council on Tuesday unanimously approved a six-month renewal, until May 31, of the 1,040-member UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) which serves as a buffer between the Syrian and Israeli armies on the Golan Heights, Reuter reports from United Nations.

The force, comprising troops from Austria, Canada and Poland, was deployed in 1974 to monitor a ceasefire and troop disengagement agreement. Its commander is Major-General Roman Misztal of Poland.

Pact on Gulf of Finland: Finland, Russia and Estonia signed a trilateral agreement on Tuesday that will tighten their supervision and control over the Gulf of Finland, Xinhua reports from Helsinki.

Under the agreement, starting next year, the three countries will cooperate on dealing with such matters as illegal immigration, drug trafficking and other crimes occurring in this region.

US rap musician Shakur shot: Tupac Shakur, a controversial rap musician and actor, was shot during a robbery attempt outside a recording studio early Wednesday, AP reports from New York.

Shakur, 23, was in guarded condition, and was conscious and alert, said Bellevue Hospital Center administrator Wesley Anglin.

114,000 children in orphanages: Some 114,000 Rwandan children remain separated from their parents and are living in orphanages or special centres in Rwanda or Zaire, UN Children's Fund officials said on Tuesday, AFP reports from Geneva.

UNICEF representative Nigel Fisher said his agency has managed to register the names of 30,000 of the children; so far, of whom 200 had been reunited with their families.

UN Council okays 500 troops for Haiti

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 30: The Security Council on Tuesday authorised the deployment of 500 troops under the UN flag to begin taking over from US-led forces in Haiti, reports AFP.

In a resolution approved 13-0 with Brazil and Russia abstaining, the Council called for boosting the 60-member observer force to begin planning the transition from a US-led force to a UN led operation.

The UN mission is to help maintain a stable environment in Haiti following the restoration of elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide three years after he was ousted in a military coup.

No date has set for the United Nations to assume leadership of the operation.

New Nepali govt to follow neutral course between China, India
Adhikary promises not to curb democracy

KATHMANDU, Nov 30: Man Mohan Adhikary, Nepal's prime minister-designate, survived 17 years in prison and upheaval in his political movement to bring communist rule to the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal, reports Reuter.

He was named prime minister on Tuesday by King Birendra — whose father, King Mahendra, sent Adhikary to prison.

Adhikary, 74, is one of a handful of elder statesmen who guided a pro-democracy movement which allied antagonists on the centre and left to bring a blood-stained end to absolute monarchy in 1990.

Four years later, the former trade union organiser has won another battle, this time against his former liberal allies of the Nepali Congress.

Adhikary shrugs off Congress claims that, thrust into

power through the ballot, he now will curb democracy.

"That is an old-fashioned way of putting things," the bearded leader said in a recent interview, seated in front of the red communist flag with hammer and sickle, and wearing dark glasses and the traditional Nepali cap.

A political pragmatist, Adhikary is the keystone in the communist unified Marxist-Leninist (UML), which he formed in 1991 by merging two rival communist groups. The UML won the most seats in this month's polls but failed to clinch a majority.

Critics whisper he is all figurehead and wields little power within the party, which harbours moderates and hardliners.

But no one from the younger generation has emerged in either his party or Congress to

challenge the leaders who spent much of their lives in prison for the cause of democracy. "I think I can hold power for five years," he told Reuters. "Then we'll see."

Adhikary's brand of communism is part nationalism, part social democracy — not unlike Congress' liberal platform. But he appeals to Nepalis who, only three years into democracy, were fed up with Congress infighting and alleged corruption.

He acknowledges the party has had to change its message since communism went on the retreat in much of the world.

"We began with Marxism as our guide," he said. "But then we never allowed ourselves to be indifferent to realities."

Adhikary cut his political teeth in 1942 when he joined the Communist Party of India and threw himself into the quit India movement which

ended five years later with India's independence.

Both Adhikary and his predecessor as prime minister, Girija Prasad Koirala, helped organise a landmark strike in 1947-48 at a jute mill in the southern town of Biratnagar. The Ranas, hereditary prime ministers, jailed him for three years.

He was arrested again in 1960 after King Mahendra staged a royal coup which aborted a brief experiment in multi-party democracy, and was jailed for seven years. After his release he organised a Marxist movement and was sent to jail again in 1970.

The communists cooperated with Congress in an interim government in 1990 and 1991. Adhikary became opposition leader after the UML came second behind Congress in 1991 polls.

Adhikary vows to lower the ceiling on landholdings and slow down a privatisation programme but protect private industry.

He promises to follow a neutral course between the country's populous neighbours, India and China, but to rewrite a friendship treaty with New Delhi he claims is unfair.

"We will not allow ideology to influence our foreign policy," he said, noting that Nepal, one of the 10 poorest nations, could not afford to alienate western donors.

"They have done very much for us and we have failed them," he said. "We don't manage things well."

Asked if the Communist Party should change its name as it has veered to the right, he said: "Many people have sacrificed themselves for that name. We have nothing to be ashamed of."

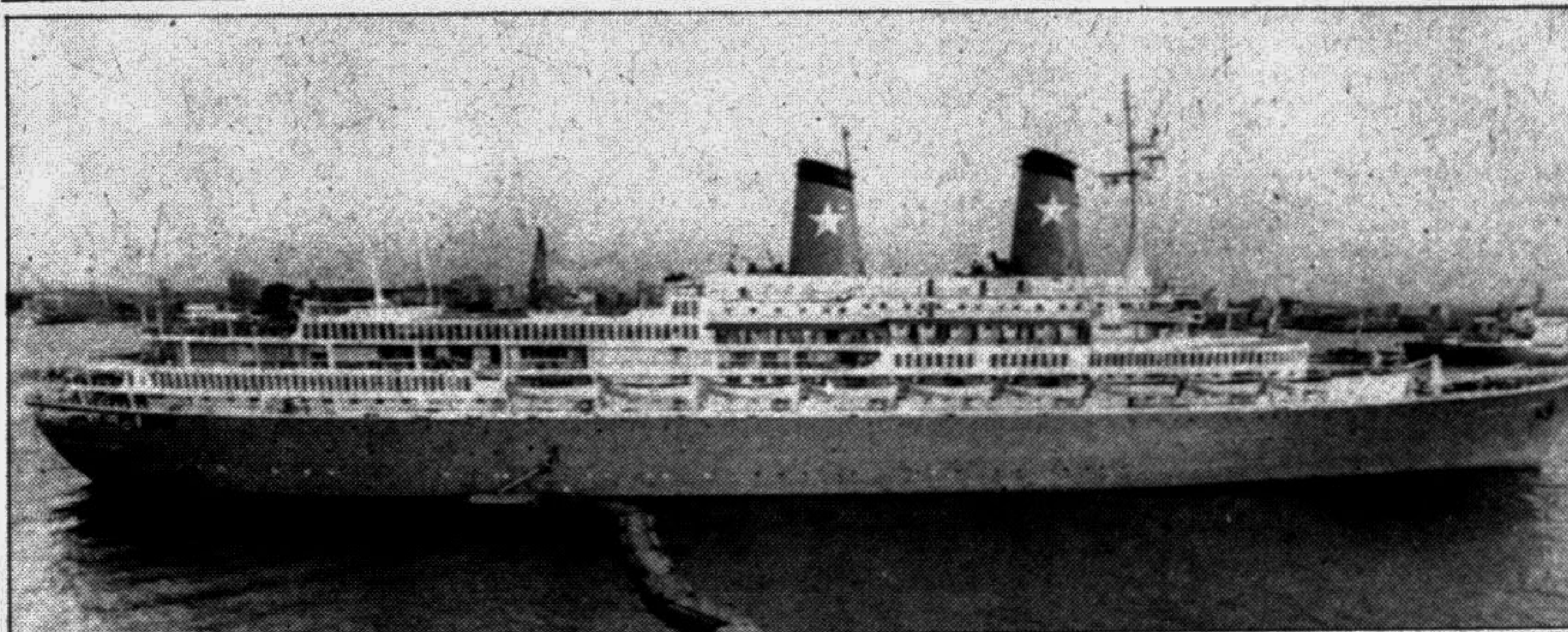
Zail Singh narrowly escapes death

CHANDIGARH, Nov 30: The former president, Giani Zail Singh, had a narrow escape when a speeding truck collided head-on with his car near village Attari Bingsaah in the Nangal-Roper road, reports PTI.

The accident occurred when Zail Singh was returning from Anandpur Sahib to Chandigarh after paying obeisance there.

The impact of the collision was so strong that the car in which the former president was travelling was completely smashed. The truck driver was promptly arrested.

Zail Singh fractured his right arm and sustained injuries on his forehead. His nephew and former Punjab MLA, Basant Singh, who was also travelling in the same car, was also injured.



File picture dated 1985 of the Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro which caught fire yesterday in the Red Sea about 120 kilometres off the Horn of Africa. Over 700 passengers and crew were evacuated and safe according to the ship's owner Starlauro in Naples. The same ship was hijacked in October 1985 by Palestinian gunmen who killed an elderly American Jewish passenger Leon Klinghoffer, throwing him overboard while he was in his wheelchair. — AFP photo

Libyans won't get UK visa to talk Lockerbie issue

LONDON, Nov 30: Several members of a Libyan delegation due in Britain this week for talks on the 1988 airline bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland, will not get visas, a government source said Tuesday, reports AFP.

"If the delegation comes to Britain, it's probable it won't come as a whole because there is little chance of certain of its members getting a visa," said the source, without elaboration.

A lawyer for the Libyan suspects in the bombing said in Tripoli Monday that a Libyan delegation would visit Britain this week at the invitation of British lawmakers.

Ibrahim Legwell, who represents the two Libyans accused of involvement in the bombing which killed 270 people, said he would be in the delegation but name nobody else in the group.

Legwell said the talks in London would focus on ways of resolving the dispute between Libya and western powers, notably Britain, the United States and France, who have accused Libya of supporting terrorism.

In London, Esmat Abdel Meguid, the secretary general of the Arab League, said league members were in "complete agreement" with Libya's proposal last month to have the two bombing suspects tried in

accordance with Scottish law before the international court of justice in the Hague.

"This is not only a Libyan matter, it is an Arab matter," Abdel Meguid said. "Libya and Arab countries have accepted in advance any judgement given by a Scottish court."

He added that Tripoli was right in wanting to hand over the two suspects to Dutch authorities as no extradition treaty exists between Libya and Britain.

Libya has been subject to UN economic sanctions including an air embargo since 1992 for its refusal to extradite the two suspects to stand trial in Britain or the United States.

7 Maoists shot dead in Andhra

HYDERABAD, Nov 30: Police Wednesday shot and killed seven members of a militant Maoist group held responsible for killing 29 people during the final week of a local election campaign, reports AP.

Police said the seven radicals of the Peoples War Group (PWG) were killed in two separate incidents in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh.

The group was blamed for planting land mines that killed 19 Indian police commandos on Saturday. Eight more policemen and two civilians were killed in another incident Tuesday.

Andhra Pradesh is one of four Indian states electing state assemblies. Elections officials said they may postpone the vote in the violence-hit districts if the trouble continues.

Dan Quayle hospitalised

INDIANAPOLIS, Nov 30: Former Vice President Dan Quayle underwent treatment Tuesday for a dangerous blood clot in his lung just weeks before he was expected to announce whether he will run for president in 1996, reports AP.

"The doctors are very optimistic about Quayle's condition right now. He's doing extremely well and he is progressing very nicely," said Pam Perry, a spokeswoman for Indiana University Medical Center.

The 47-year-old Quayle was expected to make a full recovery, the spokeswoman said.

He was being treated with anti-coagulants to prevent further clotting while natural enzymes in Quayle's body dissolve the lodged clot, said the physician treating him, Dr Homer Twigg.

The clot was considered life-threatening because it could have interfered with his breathing, Perry said.

Twigg said at a news conference that Quayle is otherwise in excellent health.

Pakistan to promote ties with China

ISLAMABAD, Nov 30: Pakistani President Farooq Ahmed Leghari leaves for China on Friday on a week-long official visit aimed at furthering already close Sino-Pakistani ties, officials said, reports AFP.

"China is seen by officials here as Pakistan's most trusted friend and ally," with whom bilateral cooperation in trade, economy and defence has been steadily growing topped by the construction of a 300 megawatt nuclear plant.

"We consider China a great friend and a great neighbour," Leghari said recently.

Observers said the two countries have identical points of view on most regional and international issues. Both supported the Afghan Mujahideen in their 14-year war against the former pro-Moscow regime in Kabul, while China backs Pakistan in its dispute with India over Kashmir.

The subcontinent neighbours have fought two of their

three wars since independence in 1947 for the control of Kashmir, India's only Muslim majority state. Pakistan supports a referendum among Kashmiris on their future. India accuses Pakistan of fomenting militancy in the Himalayan states but Islamabad denies the charge.

Foreign Ministry officials here said Leghari's visit to China was preceded by frequent high-level exchanges between the two countries.

Chinese Ambassador Zhou Gang said several agreements will be signed during Leghari's week-long visit.

China has agreed to help Pakistan manufacture tanks, and the Pakistani air force fleet includes Chinese-made fighter bombers.

Pakistan welcoming the October 4 waiver, reiterated that the imposition of sanctions was "arbitrary"

China launches East is Red satellite

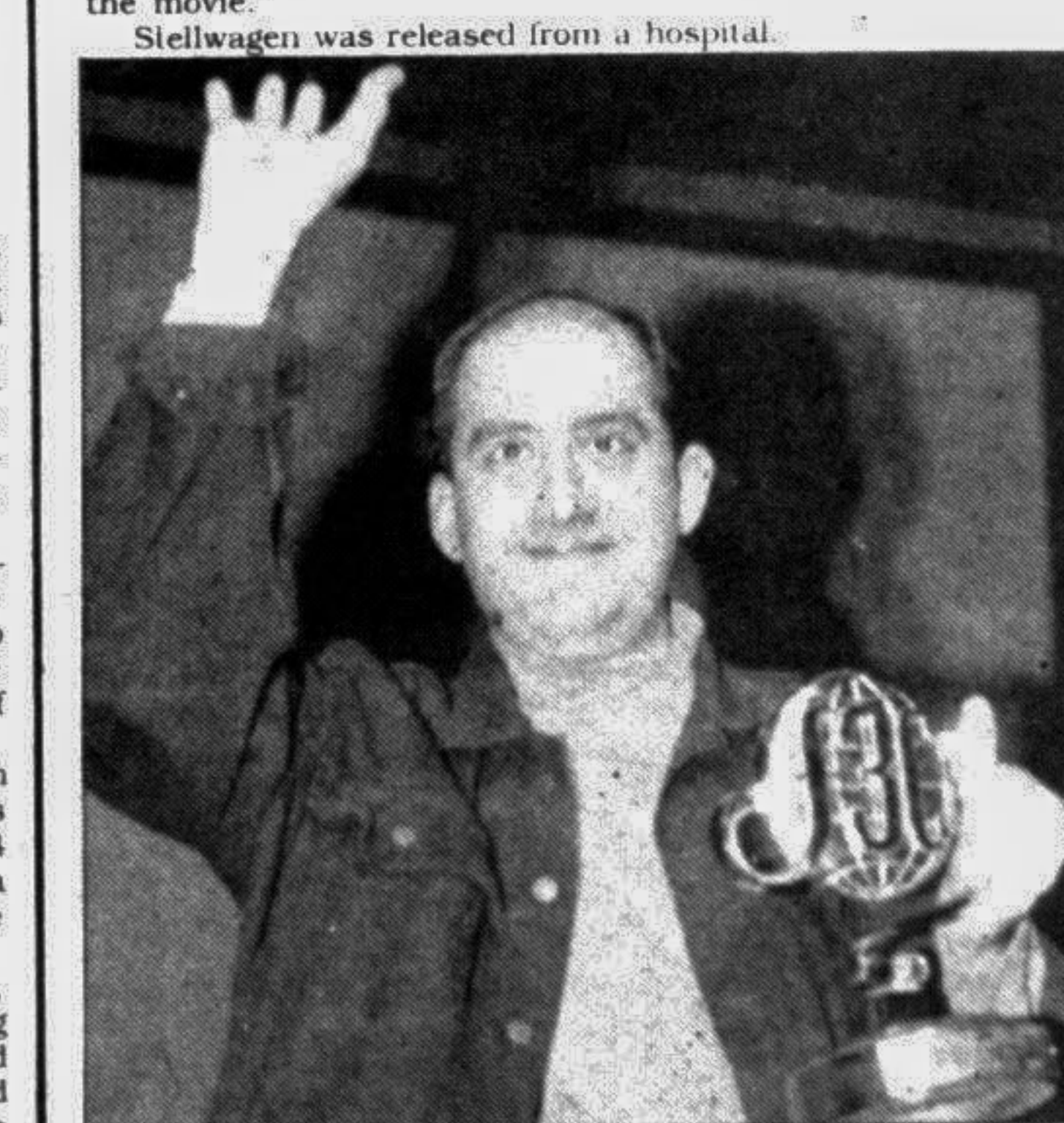
BEIJING, Nov 30: China launched its home-made East is Red telecommunications satellite on a new long march carrier rocket from its southwestern Xinchang launch site early on Wednesday, the Xinhua news agency said, reports Reuter.

It was China's 37th successful launching of a locally-made satellite, with nine going into space from the Xichang site which is in a remote area of Sichuan province.

The 2.2 tonne satellite with 24 C-band transponders was put into its proper orbit 24 minutes after lift-off, Xinhua said quoting reports from the Xi'an satellite control centre.

The East is Red satellite, which Beijing hopes to bring to world market standards and sell overseas, has a designed life span of eight years, Xinhua said.

The East is Red No. 3 satellite was launched by a long march 3A carrier rocket.



Indian film director Dev Benegal waves to spectators after he received the second prize for his film 'Auguste the English' at the festival of the three continents in Nantes, western France on Tuesday. — AFP photo

Sultan, a living proof of abuses by Indians in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, Nov 30: Propped up by a pillow on a Kashmiri rug, Masroof Sultan in remembering April 8, 1993, reports Reuter.

"Whenever I think about it," he said, "I say to myself, that was my bad night."

Sultan tells a chilling story of bad and good luck. At 20 years old, he is a symbol of hope for separatists trying to split Kashmir from Indian rule.

Amnesty International says Sultan in a living proof of abuses by Indian security forces in the embattled northern state of Jammu and Kashmir.

"Masroof Sultan: A rare survivor of torture and attempted killing in custody in Jammu and Kashmir," is the title of an Amnesty International report. This is an account of what happened to Sultan, based on an interview with Reuters and

Iran's spiritual guide Araki dead

LONDON, Nov 30: Iran's grand Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Araki, the most senior spiritual guide of Shi'ite Muslims, has died at the age of 100, the Iranian News Agency IRNA reported yesterday, says Reuter.

The agency said Araki died despite efforts by doctors to save him after being admitted to hospital in Tehran last month.

Araki had been the last survivor of a generation of senior Shi'ite clerics, including the late revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who was his student. The question of his succession had already raised heated debate in Iran.

IRNA said he was considered the greatest living marja, or religious authority, in the Islamic world.

Iran's spiritual guide Araki dead

"Since then I just stay at home," he said. "I want to finish my studies but I don't feel safe."

Sultan says his case is before the federal government but does not know where it stands. He wants revenge on the security forces "but I don't want to go in front of them."

His bullet wounds and shock marks have healed but left gashes and pockmarks. He cannot stand heat or cold. "I can't run properly and if I get excited, pain comes," he said.

The doctor gives me medicine and says don't think about the incident."

The 11 other men who were rounded up with Sultan are believed to have been killed that day.

"I'm the lucky person who survived," he said. "But this happened to me. It should not have happened to me."

Iran's spiritual guide Araki dead

troopers trained the van's headlights on him. "I heard someone say, 'he's still alive. What do we do?'"

"Shoot him in the heart," was the reply.

A trooper one metre from him fired a shot that went through his chest but missed his heart. They turned the headlights back on. "Shoot him in the head," the officer said.

One bullet hit his spine, a second grazed his forehead. "Blood was pouring out of me," Sultan said. "The man put his hand in front of my mouth. Somehow they believed I was dead."

The troopers told police to pick up a militant killed in crossfire. Sultan was later told. When the police discovered he was alive, he was rushed to hospital where he received nine pints of blood and spent the next four months recovering.

Iran's spiritual guide Araki dead

ond centre and put in a dark room with ropes and uninsulated wire, hanging from the ceiling.

They attached metal rings to his toes and penis. "Now's the time to admit you're a militant," a trooper said.

Sultan was given a dozen electric shocks. He began bleeding from his mouth and nose, then fell unconscious. When he came to, he was being beaten while hanging by his ankle from a rope.

He was dressed and driven in the dark to the bank of a canal where he was roped against a tree on his knees.

Looking under his blindfold, he saw two troopers to his left, two to his right and one in front of him. They were about three metres (10 feet) away. They opened fire with rifles.

He was hit in both legs, the right arm and wrist. Then the

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