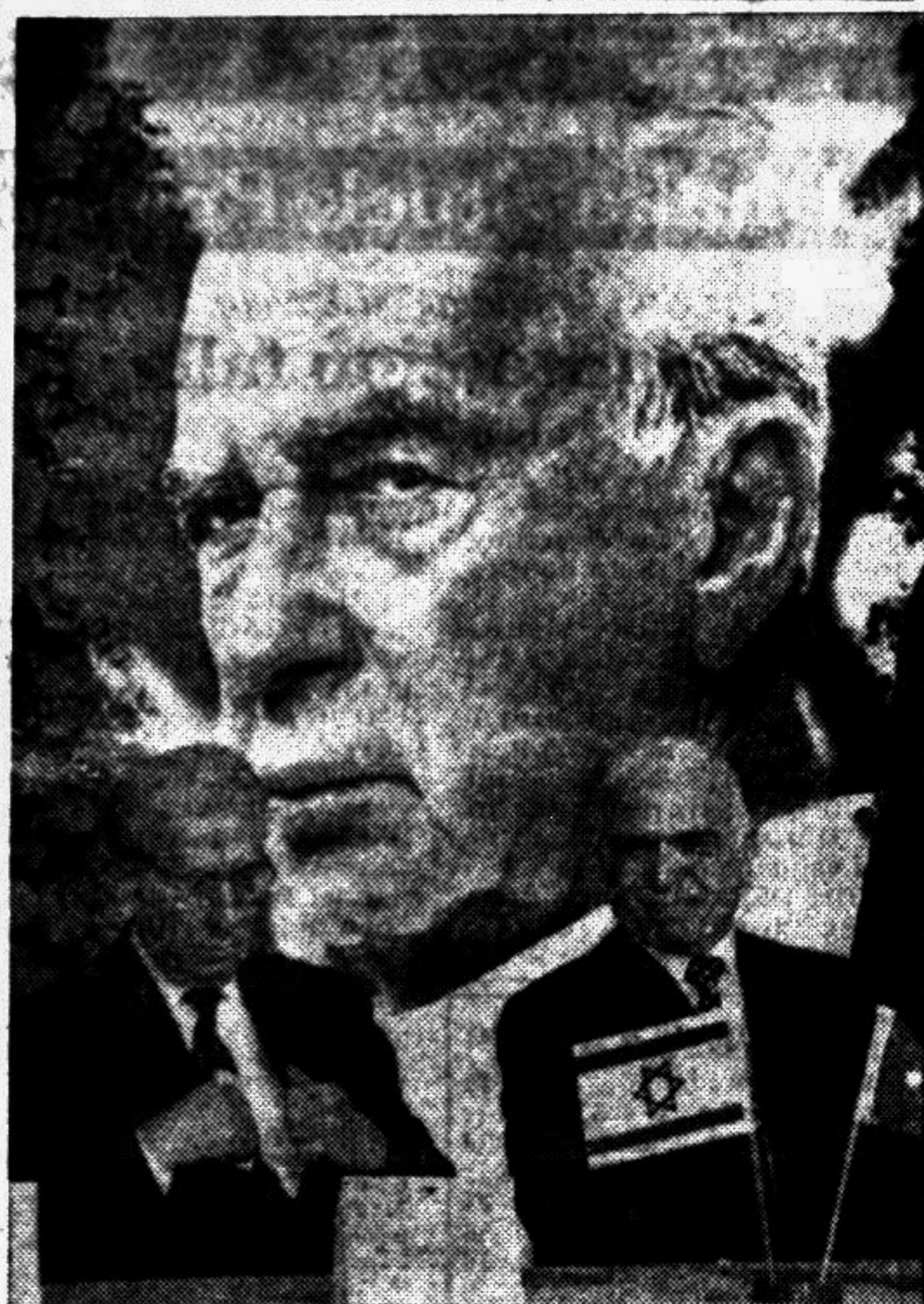


## BRIEFLY



King Hussein of Jordan and Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres under a large portrait of late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, during the king's first official visit to Tel Aviv on Wednesday, where the two men participated in the name's giving of a wing of the Ichilov hospital in memory of late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

— AFP/UNB photo

**US, Ukraine juggle wargame in June:** US and Ukrainian troops will hold joint exercises in western Ukraine in June, Defence Minister Valery Shmarov said Wednesday, AP reports from Kiev, Ukraine.

The former Soviet republic has also proposed inviting troops from other East European countries taking part in NATO's Partnership for Peace Programme, including Russia, he said. Shmarov said he and US Defence Secretary William Perry had already raised the question with Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev during a trilateral meeting in Ukraine last week.

**Death threat on Quebec leader:** A shadowy French-speaking extremist group has made death threats against the leader of the opposition in Quebec in response to similar threats made against separatist leader Lucien Bouchard, police said Wednesday, AFP reports from Montreal.

The "true Quebecois Sovereignty" group, which was unknown to police but claimed to represent 750 people, made the threat against Liberal Party leader Daniel Johnson in a letter to a weekly publication called La Frontiere, police said.

**2 red pandas born in SA zoo:** Two rare red pandas have been born at the municipal zoo in Johannesburg, significantly boosting the endangered bear's global population in captivity, the zoo said Wednesday, AFP reports from Johannesburg.

The cubs, born on Christmas day, will soon be put up for "adoption" in terms of a scheme which allows members of the public to name the animals in exchange for sponsorship, zoo curator Jacqui Thomson told the SAPA news agency.

**Indian Air Force corporal killed:** An Indian Air Force corporal was killed instantly when he fell out of an aircraft near the Taj Mahal town of Agra, a newspaper reported yesterday, AFP reports from New Delhi.

Residents of Sheikhupura village near Agra, some 200 kilometres (125 miles) south of New Delhi, were stunned when the man crashed into a house, injuring a woman and her son, the Hindustan Times said.

**Dutch father kills 3 sons:** A father stabbed to death his three sons and then turned the knife on himself in a botched suicide attempt Thursday, a police spokesman said, AP reports from Krimpen Aan Den IJssel, Netherlands.

## Chinese leaders urge US not to jeopardise ties

BEIJING, Jan 11: China's two most powerful leaders urged the United States on Wednesday not to jeopardise improvements in ties by violating its commitment to recognise Beijing as the sole government of China, reports Reuters.

"We hope to have more cooperation and less confrontation," Premier Li Peng told visiting former US President George Bush.

"We have much common ground with the United States but we also have many differences," Li said. "It is hoped that the common ground will outweigh the disagreements."

The past year had not been a quiet year for Sino-US ties, state television quoted President and Communist

Party chief Jiang Zemin as telling Bush in a reference to a downturn that sent relations plunging to their lowest point in 17 years.

"The Taiwan issue, if not handled properly, will exert a very destructive role on the development of bilateral relations."

He spoke a day after a Foreign Ministry spokesman voiced displeasure at Washington's decision to issue a transit visa to Taiwan Vice-President Li Yuan-Zu.

The spokesman called on Washington to stop what it views as effective condoning of Taiwan's actions aimed at splitting China.

The transit visa to the Taiwanese vice president allows his plane to stop in Los Angeles on January 11

## Israel reopens borders with WB, Gaza

JERUSALEM, Jan 11: Israel reopened early today its borders with Palestinian areas in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which were sealed off a week ago following the killing of a Hamas extremist, reports AFP.

The checkpoints were reopened at 04:00 am (0200 GMT), a military spokesman here said.

The West Bank and Gaza Strip were sealed off after the murder last Friday of Yehya Ayyash who was accused by Israel of being responsible for deaths of at least 45 Israelis killed in suicide bomb attacks.

The spokesman said that from dawn today Palestinian workers with proper permits were authorised to return to work in Israel.

The Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas and Islamic Jihad have vowed to avenge the death of Ayyash.

## LDP chooses Zhirinovskiy as candidate for presidency

MOSCOW, Jan 11: Russia's Liberal Democratic Party officially chose ultra-nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy as its candidate in June 16 presidential elections, Interfax news agency reported Wednesday, reports AFP.

Zhirinovskiy's designation came as little surprise, as he was the only viable presidential candidate in his party. Interfax gave no details of the result of the vote.

An AFP reporter at the Congress said most of the 99 party delegates did not even go into the polling booth to cast their vote.

Earlier, Zhirinovskiy unveiled details of his party's manifesto for the upcoming polls, which included nailing Chechen separatists.

In a speech on the opening day of the Congress, the fiery rightist said Russian President Boris Yeltsin would lose out in the election if he did not launch a pre-emptive strike against the rebels in the Caucasus republic.

## Myanmar junta detains 8 dance troupe members

BANGKOK, Jan 11: Eight members of a Myanmar dance troupe were arrested on January 7 by military intelligence after poking fun at the military-led government and have not been heard from since, Amnesty International said today, reports Reuters.

The London-based human rights organisation said in a statement received by Reuters in Bangkok it feared for the safety of the eight dance troupe members who were arrested in Myanmar's second largest city Mandalay.

"The dance troupe had performed at a 4 January independence day ceremony held in the compound of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of Myanmar's main opposition party, the National League for Democracy," the statement said.

## Stalemate on Dini's fate continues

ROME, Jan 11: Leaders on both ends of the left and right pushed for Premier Lamberto Dini to re-offer his resignation, but there appeared to be no clear movement Wednesday toward a way out of a political impasse, reports AP.

President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro two weeks ago rejected Dini's resignation and told the former central banker to sound out Parliament to see if his non-elected, year-old government of "technocrats" still has enough support in Parliament to pursue an agenda of financial reforms.

Hussein's visit coincided with US Secretary of State Warren Christopher's return to the region to promote peace talks between Israel and Syria, which recently resumed after a half-year breakdown.

"We are trying our utmost so that we can bring before our people a proposal for peace with Syria," Peres said. "By the end of the century, which is a matter of another four years, I do believe the Middle East can reach a comprehensive full peace."

Peres said there was "enough room here" for Syria's President Hafez Assad. Peres

needs confidence-building gestures from the taciturn Assad to persuade Israelis to agree to return the Golan Heights, captured from Syria in the 1967 Mideast war.

Peres hopes a treaty with Syria could be co-signed by most Arab leaders and lead to peace between Israel and the entire Arab world. Peres and Hussein were expected to discuss the idea at a meeting Wednesday evening with Christopher.

The affection showered on Hussein demonstrated the special relationship between the two countries, which made peace in 1994. It also reflected the kind of warm relations Israel seeks with the Arab world after decades of isolation.

Many Israelis are bitter over the continuing coolness

## Canadian premier urges India to sign NPT

NEW DELHI, Jan 11: Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien today asked India to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which New Delhi has persistently refused to sign, reports AFP.

Chretien, who was ceremonially received at the presidential palace here on the third-day of his six-day visit, said the nuclear issue was "very much in the mind of the Canadian government."

He said Canada wanted all countries to sign the NPT.

"There is some more progress to be made on that," he told reporters. "It is not a question of accepting or not. We want everybody to sign it. We hope that India will find a

way to accept it."

India which in 1974 conducted a nuclear test but says its nuclear programme is geared entirely for peaceful purposes, has refused to sign the NPT, branding it discriminatory between the nuclear haves and have nots.

Chretien, who arrived in Bombay on Tuesday, was received by Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao at the start of his official part of the trip.

Chretien, the first Canadian premier to come to India in 25 years said his visit was "an extremely important one" which would boost political and economic relations between the two countries.

"Our relations are very good. It is important for us to

have good relations", he said. "India is a big market of 900 million people. They are opening up."

"Our two economies have made some very definitive steps in market economy," the Canadian leader said. "Now we can see a lot of opportunities. The business community here is very keen to do business with Canada."

"We have many goods and services to sell you," he said.

Chretien took part in a meeting of the confederation of Indian industry in Bombay on Wednesday.

He will visit the Taj Mahal town of Agra tomorrow, sign commercial contracts in New Delhi on Saturday, and fly to Islamabad on Sunday.



The Crew of the Space Shuttle Endeavour (L to R) Japanese Astronaut Koichi Wakata, Winston Scott, Pilot Brent Jett, Dan Barry, Commander Brian Duffy, and Leroy Chiao pose for photographs on Wednesday at Kennedy Space Centre's launch pad 39-B with the Shuttle. The Shuttle Endeavour and her six-man crew are scheduled to blast off early Thursday on a nine-day Shuttle Mission that will retrieve and return a Japanese satellite.

— AFP/UNB photo

## Lankan army planning fresh offensive against Tigers

COLOMBO, Jan 11: Sri Lankan Deputy Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte said today the armed forces were planning fresh offensives against Tamil Tiger guerrillas in the eastern province within the next four weeks, reports Reuters.

He told Parliament that government forces would also soon clear Kilinochchi, in the northern mainland, where the rebels set up base after the fall of their Jaffna stronghold.

Ratwatte was speaking during the monthly debate on extending emergency rule in the island's north and east, where Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam rebels are fighting for an independent homeland for minority Tamils.

Security forces will clear the eastern province before the next debate in Parliament on the emergency, he said.

He said security in the east had deteriorated because

troops had been redeployed in the northern Jaffna Peninsula to capture Jaffna Town, which the rebels had turned into their spiritual capital with their own administration, courts and police force.

The government was re-

**Chiller vows not to form coalition with Erbakan's WP**

ANKARA, Jan 11: Turkish Islamist leader Necmettin Erbakan began a meeting with caretaker Prime Minister Tansu Ciller today to try to persuade her to form a government with him, reports Reuters.

Ciller has vowed not to form a coalition with Erbakan's Welfare Party, which won the most seats at general elections last month. She said earlier this week that she would meet Erbakan only "out of courtesy."

pairing the damaged town and planning to restore civil administration there so that residents could return to their homes, he said.

The Tigers forced almost all the residents of Jaffna Town to flee before government troops captured the town in early December, after seven weeks of fierce fighting.

Most of the refugees, of whom there are estimated to be more than 200,000, sought refuge in Kilinochchi.

The government is sending food and medicine to the refugees and has appealed to them to return to their homes.

But the Tigers have so far refused to let the refugees return.

The rebels attacked an army road-clearing patrol killing two soldiers and wounding another in eastern Trincomalee district this morning, security officials said.



A father and his children protest outside the parliament on Thursday during a demonstration. Some 1,000 Chungli residents display their banner asking lawmakers to help them withdraw their deposits totalling a total sum of 124.5 million US dollars held by the Farmers' Cooperative Bank in Chungli in northern Taiwan.

— AFP/UNB photo

## Masood gives details of 4-point Afghan peace plan

KABUL, Jan 11: The embattled Afghan government's top military commander Ahmad Shah Masood gave the first details on Wednesday of a four-point peace plan launched by President Burhanuddin Rabbani, reports Reuters.

The government has called on all sides to introduce a ceasefire, reopen all highways, exchange prisoners and begin peace talks, former defence minister Ahmad Shah Masood said.

He told Reuters in an interview the government had been in regular contact with all sides in the conflict.

He said the military situation had now changed completely and that the government had no worries about defending the capital, Kabul, besieged by the opposition

Taliban militia.

The Taliban Islamic militia has blockaded Kabul since October and has vowed to overthrow Rabbani and enforce a puritan Islamic regime.

Masood said the government had achieved considerable progress with some opposition groups but had not been so successful with others, although he declined to name them. However, he did say he was hopeful of progress soon.

He said the government had, for some time, been holding indirect talks with the Taliban through a Pakistan-based representative of opposition Hezb-i-Islami Party of former prime minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

## Off the Record

### The most generous husband!

BONN: An elderly German millionaire advertised on Wednesday for a man to look after his beautiful 28-year-old wife and his fortune when he dies, reports Reuters.

Walter Thiele, 75, whose off-beat inventions made him rich, said hundreds of men had responded to classified advertisements he had placed in newspapers across Germany.

"My wife is 46 years younger. She is young, beautiful and full of lust for life," Thiele, whose battery-operated laughing machine in a bag sold 120 million worldwide, said in Wednesday's Cologne-based Express Tabloid.

"She loves me and I love her, but naturally we think about the time after my death," he said. "We decided to search together for a man who will get my inheritance."

### She was in fact 120

GENEVA: Red Cross officials who queried whether a Georgian woman was really 115 years old were told that there had been an error: she was in fact 120, reports Reuters.

The woman, accompanied by her 80-year-old daughter, was a passenger on an international Red Cross flight from the western Georgian city of Senaki to Tbilisi on Christmas Day.

When ICRC delegates expressed polite doubts about the old woman's year of birth (1880), she replied that the old Tsarist officials had indeed made a mistake: in fact she was born five years earlier, the ICRC said in its weekly news bulletin.

### Weeping in despair

LONDON: A British television channel on Wednesday broadcast dramatic film of Princess Diana weeping in despair as she tried to escape from a pack of photographers outside the house of her London psychotherapist, reports Reuters.

The sky television pictures, taken at night by an amateur video operator, clearly showed Diana sobbing as she took refuge beside a garden wall, all the time illuminated by the constant flashing of cameras.

Diana, under pressure from Buckingham Palace to agree to a divorce from here, estranged husband Prince Charles, had just left the home of eating disorder therapist Susie Orbach when she was ambushed by a small group of photographers.

At first she tried to run across the road to her car, but seemed disoriented by the constant flashing and lost her way. She ended up

holding a clipboard over her face as she cried beside the wall, with the photographers just feet away.

After about 20 seconds she steadied herself, got into her car and drove off to escape her pursuers.

At one point, a woman passerby shouted at the photographers to leave Diana alone, but they ignored her.

The 90-second clip was a stark insight into the daily life of one of the world's most photographed women, who two years ago dispensed with her police bodyguards.

## AIS leader surrenders to govt Algerian rebel group GIA declares war against FIS

ALGIERS, Jan 11: Algeria's most violent Muslim militant movement, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), has declared war on the rival Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), accusing them of selling out to the government, reports AP.

In a communique circulating in Algiers that was authenticated this week, the group known by its French initials GIA accused the Salvation Front of using armed struggle to simply "regain the right to sit in Parliament."

Djamel Zitouni, head of the GIA, said in the statement that his group was committed "before God to battle the malevolent cult that calls itself the Islamic

Salvation Army," the military wing of the Salvation Front.

The threat comes amid an upsurge of violence while the government of President Liamine Zerrouk seeks to open the door to Muslim moderates and battle the militants at the same time.

AFP adds the apiritual leader of Algeria's Armed Islamic Salvation army (AIS), Aissa Lahleli, has surrendered to the authorities in eastern Algeria, the regional daily En-Nasr reported today.

Lahleli who is widely regarded as the "Multi-Genera" of the AIS gave himself up in the past few days in the Jijel district near the coast, the report said.

## Blair claims to be in better place than Major

LONDON, Jan 11: Labour opposition leader Tony Blair said today that he was better placed than Prime Minister John Major to build on the legacy of former Tory premier Margaret Thatcher, reports AFP.

Writing in the conservative daily Telegraph, Blair accused Major of not knowing whether he is a Thatcherite or a one-nation Tory, "referring to the more liberal wing of the party which likes to portray the Tories as a broad church."

"Margaret Thatcher had an agenda," said Blair, who is widely expected to become prime minister after the next general elections due to take place in spring 1997 at the latest.

"Today's Tory leadership only comes alive when attacking the Labour Party," he added.

## Cheering Israelis greet King Hussein in Tel Aviv

TEL AVIV, Israel, Jan 11: Crowds of cheering Israelis welcomed King Hussein of Jordan to Tel Aviv on Wednesday, sending a clear message to still-hostile Syria that this is the kind of peace Israel wants: warm relations, not grudging coexistence, reports AP.

Downtown Tel Aviv, Israel's bustling cultural and commercial centre, was closed to traffic for Hussein's first public visit to the city. Radio stations played Arabic songs and residents lined streets awash in Jordanian flags for a glimpse of the King's motorcade.

"I'm so moved, so touched by the warmth with which we have been received," Hussein said. "I feel at home and among friends."

Addressing Prime Minister Shimon Peres as "my fel-

low peacemaker," the 60-year-old monarch said he aspired for peace "not only between our two countries and peoples, but hopefully for this entire region in the very nearest possible future."

Hussein's visit coincided with US Secretary of State Warren Christopher's return to the region to promote peace talks between Israel and Syria, which recently resumed after a half-year breakdown.

"We are trying our utmost so that we can bring before our people a proposal for peace with Syria," Peres said. "By the end of the century, which is a matter of another four years, I do believe the Middle East can reach a comprehensive full peace."

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Peres hopes a treaty with Syria could be co-signed by most Arab leaders and lead to peace between Israel and the entire Arab world. Peres and Hussein were expected to discuss the idea at a meeting Wednesday evening with Christopher.

The affection showered on Hussein demonstrated the special relationship between the two countries, which made peace in 1994. It also reflected the kind of warm relations Israel seeks with the Arab world after decades of isolation.

Many Israelis are bitter over the continuing coolness

of ties with Egypt, which in 1979 became the first Arab country to make peace with the Jewish state but has resisted close relations. Hussein, by contrast, has urged Jordanians to support close cultural and economic bonds with Israel.

"Israel and Jordan enjoy a model peace — a warm peace, a potential full of creation and building," Peres said later Wednesday before meeting in northern Israel with Hussein and Christopher.

"We still face all manner of challenges, and the greatest of them is not to let galloping prospects of peace pass us by," he said.

Ehud Yaari, a commentator on Arab affairs for Israel TV, said Hussein wants to form an alliance with Hash-

emite dynasty, which rules a largely Palestinian population, against future threats from fellow Arabs, especially in Iraq.

The King landed at Tel Aviv's Sde Dov airfield on Jordanian military helicopter he co-piloted. Following a welcoming ceremony at the municipal airport, he and Peres drove together to Ichilov Hospital, where former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, critically wounded by a Jewish militant, died on an operating table on November 4.

Six-thousand police were deployed along the three-mile (five kilometre) route, in the largest security operation in the city's history.

At the hospital, the king visited a Jordanian air force pilot injured in a training ac-

cident and a Jordanian soldier wounded in Bosnia.

He then participated in a ceremony renaming the hospital's trauma centre after Rabin. Leah Rabin presented the king with a commemorative medal honoring her slain husband.

"I don't know of any element that can unite us like your visit," Peres said, alluding to Hussein's immense popularity among Israelis.

"This is what peace looks like," said government spokesman Uri Dromi. "I hope the Syrians will be impressed."

Dromi said it was significant the king chose to come to Tel Aviv, which "symbolises modern Israel... The fact that he is coming to Tel Aviv means he is reaching straight out to the people of Israel."

## Faction members kill Karen rebel leader

MAE SOT, Thailand, Jan 11: Renegade members of a rebel group from Myanmar crossed into Thailand and executed a veteran Karen guerrilla leader living in a refugee camp, Thai police said today, reports Reuters.

Major-General Hta Lue was shot and killed in Mae Lue refugee camp in about 40 hours today after a splinter faction of the Karen group tried to force him to accompany them back to Myanmar, the border patrol police officer said.

Hta Lue, a retired central committee member of the Karen National Union (KNU), was killed after he argued with the gunmen, members of a faction that broke away from the KNU in late 1994, he said.

The gunmen had dragged him from his house and were apparently trying to take him back to Myanmar as a hostage.