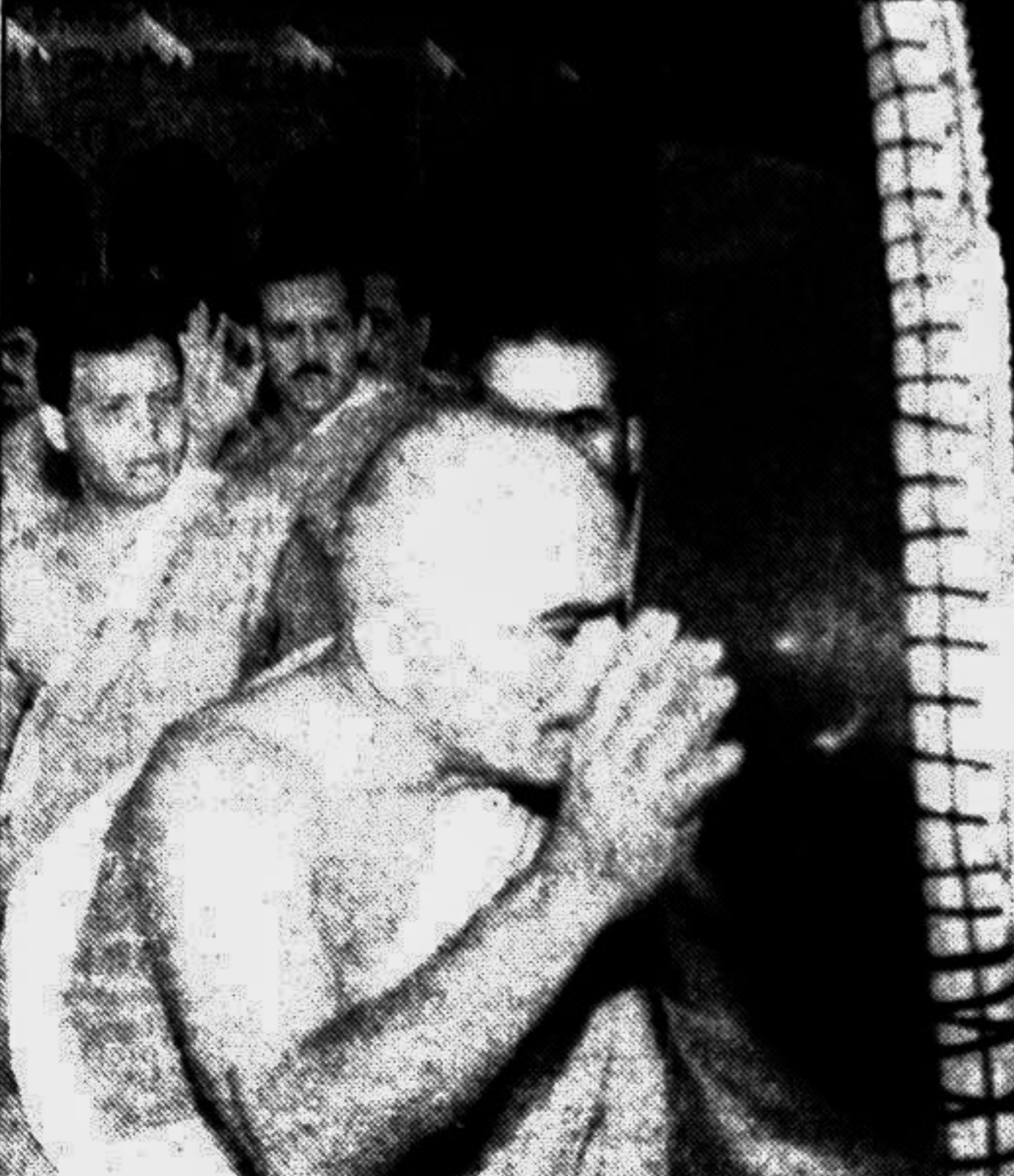


International

Chandrika urged to form probe body
Tamil lawmakers accuse army of massacring civilians

BRIEFLY



King Hussein of Jordan kisses the black stone in the Kaaba in the center of Great Mosque of holy city of Makkah...

21 die in Pak bus mishap: A truck slammed into a loaded passenger bus in central Pakistan Monday, killing at least 21 people and wounding five others.

3 army officials to die in Moscow: Three senior military figures accused of trying to overthrow Azerbaijan's President Gueidar Aliyev in October 1994 were sentenced to death by the Supreme Court in Baku Monday.

Gunman kills HR lawyer in Manila: Crusading journalist and human rights lawyer Ferdinand Reyes was shot dead by a long gunman in his office in the southern Philippines, local newspapers said yesterday.

Ex-ROK PM joins ruling NKP: Former South Korean Prime Minister Lee Hong-Koo yesterday joined South Korea's embattled ruling party to bolster its chances in April's crucial parliamentary elections.

16 criminals executed in China: Sixteen men convicted of murder, rape, fraud and other crimes have been executed in the biggest mass execution ever in China's free-wheeling Shenzhen special economic zone.

Italian journalist Barbato dies: Andrea Barbato, the journalist who covered John F. Kennedy's assassination and the first steps on the moon for Italian television, died of heart failure Monday.

9 die as ferry sinks in China: Nine people were killed and 30 were missing after a ferry sank in strong winds off eastern China, news report said Tuesday.

Gas poisoning kills 19 in China: Gas poisoning has killed 19 people in the last month in Shanghai in the latest of a series of accidents that highlight poor safety standards.

Haitian plane crash kills 9: A small plane from the Haiti Air Express Airline crashed and burst into flames Monday near the Port-Au-Prince airport shortly after take-off, killing nine of the 14 people aboard.

15 die in Jakarta floods: At least 15 people have died in massive Jakarta flooding which affected more than half a million residents, leaving the capital still crippled yesterday.

Italian govt, opposition closer to agreement: ROME, Feb 13: Chances appeared better for an agreement on a new government Monday after two key political foes seemed to move closer on the need for sweeping changes on the way Italy is governed.

103 nominations submitted for this year's Nobel Peace Prize: OSLO, Norway, Feb 13: The US president, a Chinese dissident, Russian activists and a Kurdish Parliamentarian are among the 103 people and organisations nominated for this year's Nobel Peace Prize.

Niger rulers vow to hold polls by year end: NIAMEY, Niger, Feb 13: Niger's military government promised Monday to hold elections by the end of the year to return the country to civilian rule.

Off the Record Deal with drug dealers: RIO DE JANEIRO: Reports Monday said pop superstar Michael Jackson paid drug traffickers for permission to film a music video in a city slum.

Off the Record The greatest purpose of condoms: PARIS: In a report contradicting Vatican doctrine, the French Bishops Conference said Monday that the use of condoms is "necessary" in preventing the spread of AIDS.

Off the Record Bob Dole wins Republican caucus in Iowa: DES MOINES, Iowa, Feb 13: Bob Dole won Iowa's Republican presidential caucus Monday night, but he shared the spotlight with conservative commentator Pat Buchanan who emerged from a nine-man field and threatened to challenge Dole's standing as Republican front runner.

Off the Record Communist comeback makes Moscow's elite anxious: MOSCOW, Feb 13: A glossy magazine for Russian businessmen is about to hit newsstands with an article, only half tongue-in-cheek, on "how to flee," reports AP.

Off the Record Niger rulers vow to hold polls by year end: NIAMEY, Niger, Feb 13: Niger's military government promised Monday to hold elections by the end of the year to return the country to civilian rule.

Off the Record Deal with drug dealers: RIO DE JANEIRO: Reports Monday said pop superstar Michael Jackson paid drug traffickers for permission to film a music video in a city slum.

Off the Record The greatest purpose of condoms: PARIS: In a report contradicting Vatican doctrine, the French Bishops Conference said Monday that the use of condoms is "necessary" in preventing the spread of AIDS.

Off the Record Bob Dole wins Republican caucus in Iowa: DES MOINES, Iowa, Feb 13: Bob Dole won Iowa's Republican presidential caucus Monday night, but he shared the spotlight with conservative commentator Pat Buchanan who emerged from a nine-man field and threatened to challenge Dole's standing as Republican front runner.

Off the Record Communist comeback makes Moscow's elite anxious: MOSCOW, Feb 13: A glossy magazine for Russian businessmen is about to hit newsstands with an article, only half tongue-in-cheek, on "how to flee," reports AP.

Off the Record Niger rulers vow to hold polls by year end: NIAMEY, Niger, Feb 13: Niger's military government promised Monday to hold elections by the end of the year to return the country to civilian rule.

Off the Record Deal with drug dealers: RIO DE JANEIRO: Reports Monday said pop superstar Michael Jackson paid drug traffickers for permission to film a music video in a city slum.

COLOMBO, Feb 13: Tamil lawmakers on Tuesday accused the military of massacring 24 Tamil civilians and urged President Chandrika Kumaratunga to appoint a commission to investigate, reports AP.

rebels claimed that the soldiers then entered the village in trucks, ordered villagers to gather in one spot and attacked them with knives, machetes and swords.

Arafat takes oath as president

GAZA CITY, Feb 13: PLO leader Yasser Arafat took the oath of office Monday as president of the Palestinian Authority in a solitary ceremony that emphasized his grip on power, reports AP.

With his right hand on the Quran, the Muslim holy book, Arafat pledged to "fulfill the national hope" of the Palestinian people.

The ceremony was held in the "White House," a recently refurbished two-story building in downtown Gaza City where the Palestinian council elected January 20 will meet.

British, Irish leaders promise to salvage peace process: LONDON, Feb 13: British and Irish leaders promised to try to salvage the tattered Northern Ireland peace process but insisted that before talks can move forward the IRA must reinstate the 17 months ceasefire it ended with a bomb in London.

Three Russian servicemen shot dead in Grozny: GROZNY, Russia, Feb 13: Three Russian servicemen were reported shot dead at a checkpoint in the capital of rebel Chechnya on Monday.

Gas poisoning kills 19 in China: Gas poisoning has killed 19 people in the last month in Shanghai in the latest of a series of accidents that highlight poor safety standards.

Haitian plane crash kills 9: A small plane from the Haiti Air Express Airline crashed and burst into flames Monday near the Port-Au-Prince airport shortly after take-off, killing nine of the 14 people aboard.

15 die in Jakarta floods: At least 15 people have died in massive Jakarta flooding which affected more than half a million residents, leaving the capital still crippled yesterday.

Italian govt, opposition closer to agreement: ROME, Feb 13: Chances appeared better for an agreement on a new government Monday after two key political foes seemed to move closer on the need for sweeping changes on the way Italy is governed.

103 nominations submitted for this year's Nobel Peace Prize: OSLO, Norway, Feb 13: The US president, a Chinese dissident, Russian activists and a Kurdish Parliamentarian are among the 103 people and organisations nominated for this year's Nobel Peace Prize.

Niger rulers vow to hold polls by year end: NIAMEY, Niger, Feb 13: Niger's military government promised Monday to hold elections by the end of the year to return the country to civilian rule.

Off the Record Deal with drug dealers: RIO DE JANEIRO: Reports Monday said pop superstar Michael Jackson paid drug traffickers for permission to film a music video in a city slum.

Off the Record The greatest purpose of condoms: PARIS: In a report contradicting Vatican doctrine, the French Bishops Conference said Monday that the use of condoms is "necessary" in preventing the spread of AIDS.

Off the Record Bob Dole wins Republican caucus in Iowa: DES MOINES, Iowa, Feb 13: Bob Dole won Iowa's Republican presidential caucus Monday night, but he shared the spotlight with conservative commentator Pat Buchanan who emerged from a nine-man field and threatened to challenge Dole's standing as Republican front runner.

Off the Record Communist comeback makes Moscow's elite anxious: MOSCOW, Feb 13: A glossy magazine for Russian businessmen is about to hit newsstands with an article, only half tongue-in-cheek, on "how to flee," reports AP.

Off the Record Niger rulers vow to hold polls by year end: NIAMEY, Niger, Feb 13: Niger's military government promised Monday to hold elections by the end of the year to return the country to civilian rule.

Off the Record Deal with drug dealers: RIO DE JANEIRO: Reports Monday said pop superstar Michael Jackson paid drug traffickers for permission to film a music video in a city slum.

Off the Record The greatest purpose of condoms: PARIS: In a report contradicting Vatican doctrine, the French Bishops Conference said Monday that the use of condoms is "necessary" in preventing the spread of AIDS.

Off the Record Bob Dole wins Republican caucus in Iowa: DES MOINES, Iowa, Feb 13: Bob Dole won Iowa's Republican presidential caucus Monday night, but he shared the spotlight with conservative commentator Pat Buchanan who emerged from a nine-man field and threatened to challenge Dole's standing as Republican front runner.

Off the Record Communist comeback makes Moscow's elite anxious: MOSCOW, Feb 13: A glossy magazine for Russian businessmen is about to hit newsstands with an article, only half tongue-in-cheek, on "how to flee," reports AP.

Off the Record Niger rulers vow to hold polls by year end: NIAMEY, Niger, Feb 13: Niger's military government promised Monday to hold elections by the end of the year to return the country to civilian rule.

Off the Record Deal with drug dealers: RIO DE JANEIRO: Reports Monday said pop superstar Michael Jackson paid drug traffickers for permission to film a music video in a city slum.



EU Administrator Hans Koschnick (L) shows 'crossed fingers' as he along with Ejjup Ganic (C), Vice-President of the Bosnian-Croat Federation, and NATO Secretary General Javier Solana (R) tours the Muslim part of the divided city of Mostar on Monday.

North Koreans losing faith in communist regime

SEOUL, Feb 13: North Korea's economy is surviving on a "hand-to-mouth basis," turning some elite members of the closed, communist society against its leadership.

Bob Dole wins Republican caucus in Iowa

DES MOINES, Iowa, Feb 13: Bob Dole won Iowa's Republican presidential caucus Monday night, but he shared the spotlight with conservative commentator Pat Buchanan who emerged from a nine-man field and threatened to challenge Dole's standing as Republican front runner.

Communist comeback makes Moscow's elite anxious

MOSCOW, Feb 13: A glossy magazine for Russian businessmen is about to hit newsstands with an article, only half tongue-in-cheek, on "how to flee," reports AP.

Niger rulers vow to hold polls by year end

NIAMEY, Niger, Feb 13: Niger's military government promised Monday to hold elections by the end of the year to return the country to civilian rule.

22 killed as Tajik rebels attack govt convoy

DUSHANBE, Tajikistan, Feb 13: Seventeen Tajik government soldiers and five civilians were killed when guerrillas ambushed a government convoy headed for a restive, mountainous region of Tajikistan, officials said Monday, reports AP.

Tajik presidential spokesman Zafar Saidov, speaking to the ITAR-Tass news agency, blamed Muslim opposition militants for the hours-long clash Sunday night in the Komsomolabad region, northeast of the Tajik capital Dushanbe.

The government last week sent reinforcements to the area. On Monday, it reported sporadic clashes, but said army units were controlling key positions.

Off the Record Deal with drug dealers

RIO DE JANEIRO: Reports Monday said pop superstar Michael Jackson paid drug traffickers for permission to film a music video in a city slum.

Jackson filmed for six hours Sunday in Rio's Dona Marta, a jumble of shacks, open sewage ditches and maze-like alleys.

Rio newspapers said Jackson's production crew had paid protection money to a cocaine kingpin known as Marinho VP, who controls the drug trade in Dona Marta.

Trafficker Co-Produces Clip, blared the headline of Rio's Jornal do Brasil.

Traffickers Control Michael's Security, the Globo newspaper said on its front page.

Filmmaker Spike Lee, who directed the scenes, admitted that producers had paid "somebody" for permission.

We had to get permission from somebody to shoot there, Lee said in a televised interview Monday.

Rio's police chief, Holo Luz, called Lee a "chump" for paying protection.

The greatest purpose of condoms

PARIS: In a report contradicting Vatican doctrine, the French Bishops Conference said Monday that the use of condoms is "necessary" in preventing the spread of AIDS.

Many competent doctors affirm that a condom of good quality is currently the only method of prevention.

Those responsible for public health, legitimately worried about the spread of AIDS and the cost of treating it, support the use of condoms.

The Church, suspected of being totally opposed to their use, sees itself accused of working in favour death.

A spokesman for the bishops conference said in a telephone interview that the report reflects the official policy of the French Catholic Church.

The Rev Albert Rouet, bishop of Poitiers, later elaborated on the report.

We said what other bishops had said before us: When an adult, as mature as one can be in this domain, considers he can't do without sexual relations and there is a danger, it's better to use that condom, that's obvious.

Bob Dole wins Republican caucus in Iowa

DES MOINES, Iowa, Feb 13: Bob Dole won Iowa's Republican presidential caucus Monday night, but he shared the spotlight with conservative commentator Pat Buchanan who emerged from a nine-man field and threatened to challenge Dole's standing as Republican front runner.

Communist comeback makes Moscow's elite anxious

MOSCOW, Feb 13: A glossy magazine for Russian businessmen is about to hit newsstands with an article, only half tongue-in-cheek, on "how to flee," reports AP.

Niger rulers vow to hold polls by year end

NIAMEY, Niger, Feb 13: Niger's military government promised Monday to hold elections by the end of the year to return the country to civilian rule.