



Passengers leave the hijacked Sudan Airways 310 Airbus at Standsted Airport early Tuesday. — AFP/UNB photo

### Sudan's plane hijack 7 armed Iraqis being questioned

LONDON, Aug 28: British police today began questioning seven armed Iraqis who apparently asked for asylum after hijacking a Sudanese airliner with 199 passengers and crew on board to London's Stansted airport, reports Reuters.

The real grilling will start tomorrow, said a police spokesman late on Tuesday as the seven men were being held in prison after the episode ended peacefully.

The hijackers seized the plane shortly after it left Khartoum on Monday and threatened to blow it up if they were not taken to London. The Airbus A 310 airliner refuelled at Larnaca, Cyprus and landed at Stansted early on Tuesday.

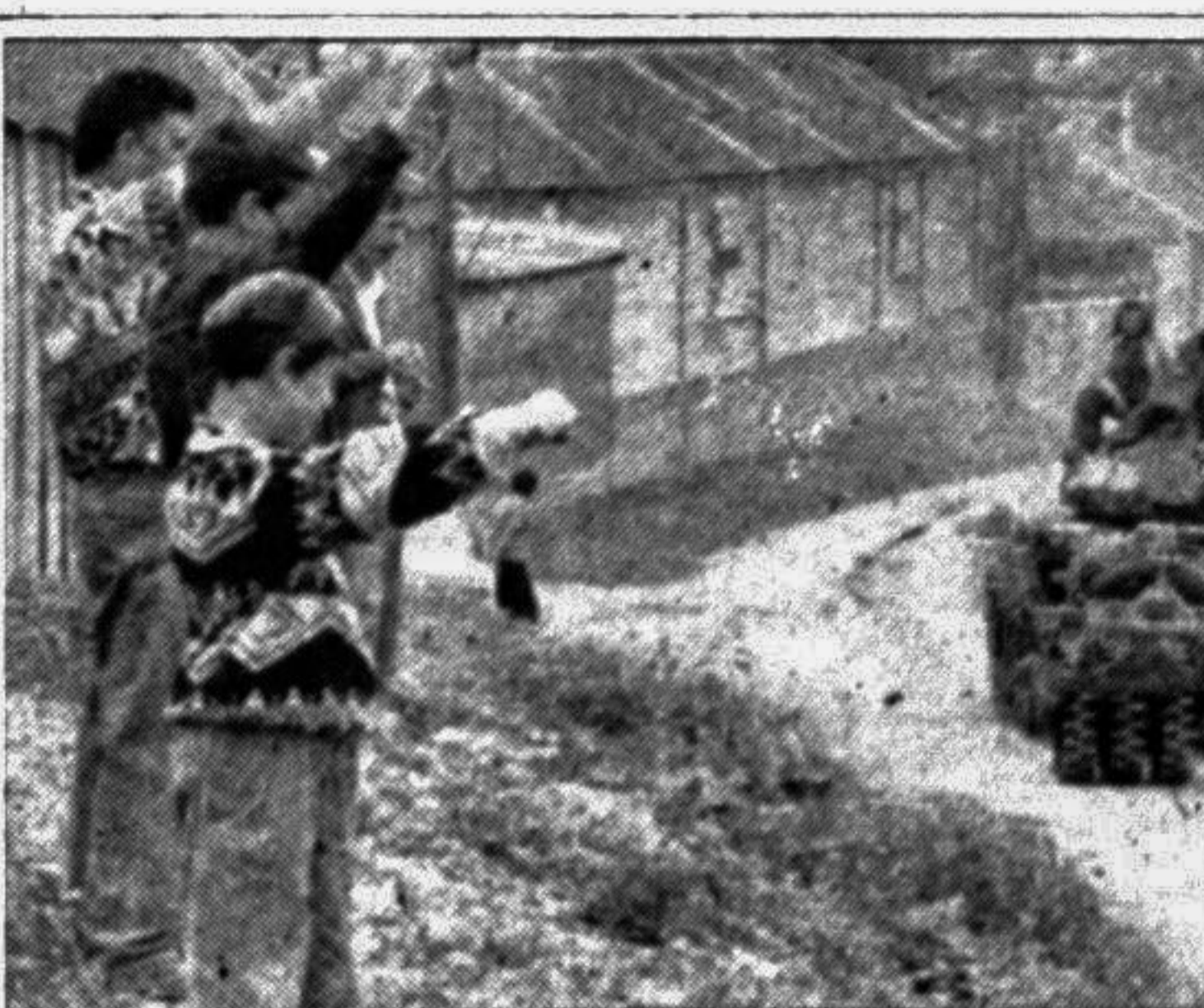
A thorough police search of plane only uncovered knives and fake explosives, triggering questions as to whether the seven men were guerillas or refugees.

## Southern Philippines to get autonomy Govt, MNLF agree to sign peace accord

JAKARTA, Aug 28: Philippine diplomats and Muslim separatists met in Jakarta Wednesday to make final preparations before they sign an Indonesian brokered peace agreement ending 26 years of civil war in southern Philippines, reports AP.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas told reporters that all contentious issues have been resolved, including the key question of integrating the rebel forces into the Philippine national police and the armed forces.

"We are confident that... we will be able to complete our work and reach permanent peace. For there is no peace without freedom and justice," said Nur Misuari, the chief of the Moro National Liberation Front.



Chechen civilians raise their fists and shout 'Allah u Akbar' (Allah is great) as a Russian tank leads a column of vehicles leaving the village of Shatoi in the mountainous region of the Caucasus republic, Tuesday. Russian President Boris Yeltsin remained out of sight on holiday leaving the peace plan for Chechnya in limbo as commanders met to strengthen a ceasefire. — AFP/UNB photo

The MNLF once fought for a separate nation and later for more autonomy in the Muslim-dominated southern provinces of the predominantly Catholic nation. According to Manila, the civil war left 50,000 people dead. The MNLF puts the toll at 200,000.

Misuari and veteran Philippine diplomat Manuel T. Yanu will sign an initial peace agreement on Friday in Jakarta. A full agreement will be sealed in Manila on September 2.

Indonesia, which hosted the three previous rounds of peace talks, was selected for the ceremony in its capacity as chairman of the 51-nation Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC).

Friday's signing ceremony will be witnessed by Indonesian President Suharto and Hamid Algabid, secretary general of the Organisation of Islamic Conference.

The MNLF agreed to accept an autonomous regional government for three years. Until then, the MNLF will have a chance to demonstrate its leadership by heading a new council that will oversee economic development in 14 southern provinces.

The most important breakthrough was in the transitional implementing structure, which was the main bone of contention, Alatas said.

## Congress (I) threatens to quit United Front govt

NEW DELHI, Aug 28: A leader of India's Congress (I) Party today warned it could withdraw crucial legislative backing from the minority government reports AFP.

Pranab Mukherjee, the Congress leader in the Upper House of Parliament, made the withdrawal threat after being heckled by members of the coalition.

But former Prime Minister and Congress President P V Narasimha Rao later said the ruling United Front coalition faced no danger.

Mukherjee flared up after Renuka Choudhury of the Telugu Desam Party, a key member of the United Front, dared the Congress Party to withdraw its support.

"We will do it, thundered Mukherjee amid a noisy scene. This is most objectionable. Dog's threaten us."

The Congress has 140 MPs in the lower house, and its support is crucial for the survival of Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda's government.

## Hezb-I-Islami commander surrenders Taliban consolidate grip on Pakiya province

ISLAMABAD, Aug 28: The rebel Islamic Taliban militia said on Tuesday it had consolidated its grip on an important district held by the pro-government Hezb-I-Islami faction in the eastern Afghan province of Pakiya, reports Reuters.

The Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) quoted a Taliban spokesman in north-western Pakistani town of Peshawar as saying that Taliban had taken over most of Jaji Maidan district after pro-government forces surrendered on Monday.

It said Hezb-I-Islami commander Arman and 500 fighters surrendered without any resistance and handed over the tanks and weapons to the invading Taliban.

Two other pro-government commanders also gave up their command without putting up a fight, it added.

Hezb-I-Islami officials could not immediately be contacted and no independent account of the incident was available.

Hezb-I-Islami leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, once a main opponent of Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani, rejoined the Kabul government in June as Prime Minister.

The Taliban movement has sworn to oust Rabbani and install a purist Islamic order throughout Afghanistan.

## Hammas calls for fight against Israel

GAZA CITY, Aug 28: The Islamic militant group Hamas on Tuesday urged Palestinians to fight against Israel's occupation and settlement of the Palestinian territories using all means at their disposal, reports AFP.

A Hamas statement distributed in Gaza called for a fight "using all available means" against the occupation and the new Israeli right-wing government's plans to expand settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

It also condemned plans for a resumption of high-level talks between Israel and the Palestinians that could lead to an Arafat summit with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"Hamas considers this step as purely tactical and does not expect any real improvement in conditions for the Palestinian people," said the statement by the group's Amman-based spokesman, Ibrahim Ghoshe.

An Arafat-Netanyahu summit would be a gesture to appease US and Egyptian leaders who call for a resumption of the peace process and to "make up for collective Palestinian frustration over the behaviour of Arafat's authority," it said.

Netanyahu's government took its biggest step yet to expand the Jewish presence in the occupied territories on Tuesday by announcing the construction of 800 homes for orthodox Jews in the West Bank.

The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) is fiercely opposed to Arafat's autonomy accords with Israel and has carried out a series of suicide bombings and other attacks against the Jewish state.

AP from Jerusalem adds: A US senator is travelling to Syria with a message from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, an Israel radio report said Tuesday.

Netanyahu's spokesman Shai Bazar confirmed that Senator Arlen Specter met with Netanyahu and Foreign Minister David Levy in Jerusalem on Tuesday, but refused to reveal details of the meeting.

Israel radio said Specter was carrying a message to Damascus at Netanyahu's request. The report did not give details of the message but Netanyahu, who was elected premier in May, has said Israel is waiting for a response from Syria to renew stalled peace negotiations.

Bazak did not confirm or deny the report.

## Pilgrimage death toll in Kashmir crosses 200

SRINAGAR, India, Aug 28: Rescuers searching for victims from a Hindu pilgrimage that turned into a death march have found several dozen more bodies, inflating the death toll to more than 200, police said Wednesday, reports AP.

A freak snowstorm and torrential rains last week caught tens of thousands of Hindu pilgrims off guard and left them trapped without shelter in Kashmir's unforgiving mountainous terrain. Many died of exposure.

The survivors have been working their way to a makeshift relief camp in the Kashmiri town of Pahalgam.

In Pahalgam and Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu Kashmir state, local authorities cremated and buried scores of bodies.

## Troops-Tigers clash leaves 11 dead in Lanka

COLOMBO, Aug 28: At least 11 people were killed when government soldiers clashed with Tamil rebels in northeastern Sri Lanka, the military said Wednesday, reports AP.

Eight rebels and three soldiers were killed Tuesday in the skirmish in Kokkuttuduvil village, 230 kilometres (143 miles) northeast of Colombo.

Ten soldiers and an unspecified number of rebels were wounded, said Maj. Tilak Dunuwille, a military spokesman.

Soldiers attacked the rebels during a routine patrol, but soon found themselves outnumbered. Reinforcements were then rushed from a nearby base and the military managed to defeat the rebels, Dunuwille said.

Fourth south, thousands of soldiers stayed for the third week on the outskirts of Killinochchi, a town the rebels began using as their headquarters after being driven out of Jaffna City in December.

## Leader of Japan coalition party to resign

TOKYO, Aug 28: The leader of one of Japan's ruling coalition parties decided today to resign following differences with a senior party member over the formation of a new party, a spokesman for new party Sakigake said, reports AFP.

The disclosure came as Sakigake leader Masayoshi Takemura held fresh talks with the party's secretary-general Yukio Hatoyama in a bid to persuade him to include all Sakigake members in his proposed new party.

"He expressed his intention to resign to a senior Sakigake official," the party spokesman said. "Takemura said he would consult with his two deputies about the timing of the resignation."

Takemura, a former finance minister, failed to iron out the differences with Hatoyama in a two-and-a-half hour meeting on Tuesday evening. Hatoyama had announced his intention to leave the party earlier in the day.

As he entered the second meeting Wednesday morning, Takemura told reporters: "I would like to seek a way to bring us together once again regardless of what has been done and what has been said."

"But it's not easy to find a way to do this," he said.

## First int'l meet on child prostitution Heavy penalty for child sex related crimes urged

STOCKHOLM, Aug 28: Sexually abusing children for profit is "a contemporary form of slavery" that requires international cooperation to stop, according to the draft agenda of an international conference fighting child exploitation, reports AP.

The draft, to be adopted Wednesday, urges strong criminal sanctions against a range of child-sex-related crimes, including punishment for people who pay for the services of child prostitutes.

"The sexual exploitation of children must carry a heavy penalty all over the world," German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel told the opening session of the World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.

There must be "no escape from punishment" for the perpetrators, he said Tuesday.

Delegates from 120 to 130 countries gathered this week for the five-day conference, which is the first international meeting of its kind. This month's excavation of the bodies of girls allegedly killed by a child pornography ring in Belgium added urgency to the effort.

The conference designed to join world leaders into action to stop child pornography and prostitution, which has flourished in parts of the world thanks in part to technological advances and economic disparity.

The delegations — 50 of which were headed by government cabinet ministers — urged stronger cooperation among governments, non-government agencies and international agencies such as Interpol, to prevent children from entering the sex trade.

They also urged better support for children already involved.

While the declaration and agenda still could be modified before adoption, the basic goals will remain unchanged. Copies of the draft were released to reporters Tuesday.

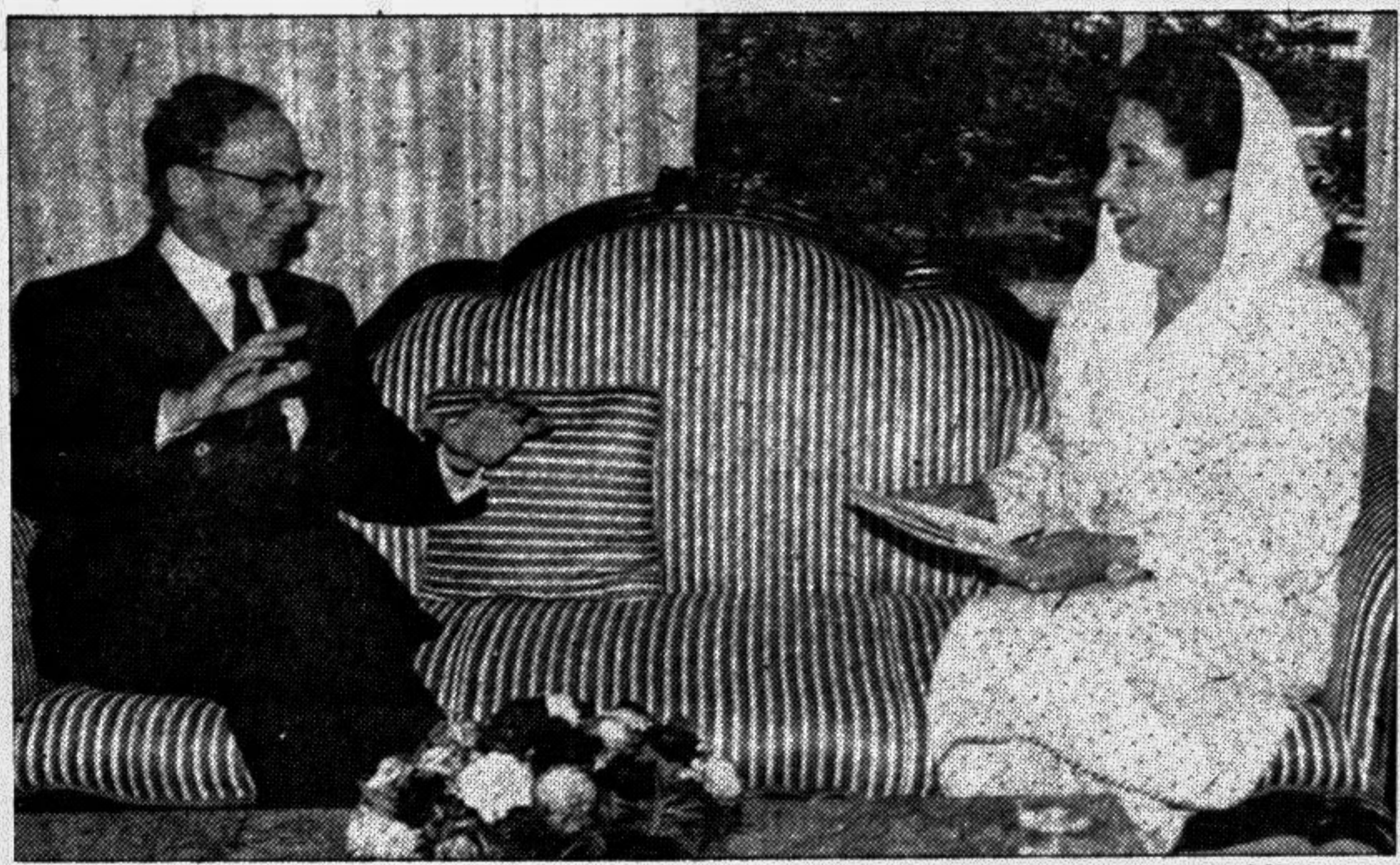
The problem of child sexual exploitation is worst in parts of Asia — especially Thailand, the Philippines and India — as well as in Africa, Eastern Europe, still shaken by the fall of communism, is also facing a growing problem.

UNICEF, one of the main participants in the conference organised by the Swedish government, estimates that 1 million children a year are forced into child prostitution, trafficked and sold for sexual purposes, or used in producing pornography, which is gaining an wider audience because of the Internet and other advances in communications.

## Socialism going thru' difficult time, says Kim

TOKYO, Aug 28: Socialism is going through a difficult time and has a poor image but it remains the only way for North Korea and its young people, North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il was quoted as saying Tuesday, reports AFP.

"Nowadays, owing to the pernicious anti-socialist offensive of the imperialists and the nasty trick of the betrayers of socialism, socialism is going through a trial and its image has been seriously damaged," said Kim, the designated heir to his father, late president Kim Il-Sung.



British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind (L) meets with Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in Islamabad Monday. Rifkind is on a two day official visit in Pakistan, to discuss regional and international issues with Pakistani officials. — AFP/UNB photo

## BRIEFLY

**Mother Teresa improving:** Doctors treating Mother Teresa say the condition of the 86-year-old nun is improving and that she wants to go home to resume her work among the poor and destitute. Reuters reports from Calcutta.

"I want to go home," Dinamani Banerjee, one of six doctors treating her at Calcutta's Woodlands Nursing Home, quoted the renowned Roman Catholic missionary as saying. Mother Teresa spoke on Tuesday, her 86th birthday, for the first time in a week.

**195 S Korean students detained:** South Korean Police raided 11 university campuses in Seoul yesterday and detained 195 students, including three radicals accused of leading last week's violent campus protests, a police spokesman said, AFP reports from Seoul.

In a related development, the national police agency said it had requested 23.3 million dollars in extra budget funds to buy up-to-date anti-riot equipment. The new equipment includes rubber bullets, stun guns, helicopter multiple teargas launchers, water cannons, plastic shields and 16 armored anti-riot vehicles.

**Guatemalan peace talks resume:** Guatemalan government and rebel representatives resumed talks on the future of the country's military, buoyed by recent progress in ending Guatemala's three-decade civil war. AP reports from Mexico City.

Both sides have stuck to an informal March cease-fire and are to sign a final truce in Oslo, Norway in October. The final accord is expected later this year, and will lay out plans for demobilization of the 1,000 to 2,000 guerillas still hiding in the Guatemala countryside. Not all in Guatemala support the negotiations between the guerillas and government, a fact representatives on both side acknowledge Tuesday.

**Palestinian HR activist freed:** A Palestinian human rights activist was released Tuesday after spending two weeks in jail in the Gaza Strip for suggesting a prisoner may have been tortured to death by interrogators, AP reports from Jerusalem.

Mohammed Dahman was arrested Aug 12 after publishing a statement urging Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority to investigate the death of Nahid Dahalan, a 24-year-old Gaza resident who was found dead hours after being interrogated, Palestinian Attorney General Khaled Kidreh had said Dahalan committed suicide. Dahman was arrested for publicising false accusations against the Palestinian Authority.

**7 more executed in China:** China has executed seven more armed robbers in its crackdown on violent crime, a report said yesterday AFP reports from Beijing. The executions were carried out Tuesday after final sentencing by the people's supreme court, the Xinhua news agency said. Zhang Zhenqi, Miaoao Guocai and Miao Guochang, from the central province of Henan, were found guilty on 36 separate charges of armed robbery carried out between August 1992 and January 1996.

**Cambodian chopper crash kills 2:** Two people died when a Cambodian military helicopter crashed in the central province of Kompong Thom, a defence ministry official said Tuesday, AP reports from Phnom Penh.

Three passengers were airlifted out, but 18 injured survivors remained behind to spend a third night in the jungle. Gen Pol Savoeun, deputy chief of staff of the ministry, said two people — one a pregnant woman — were killed in the crash of the Russian-made Mi-17 helicopter Sunday in the jungle in the area of Phnom Chhi, or Chhi Mountain.

**Burundi lobbies against UN ban:** Burundi's ambassador said Tuesday the regional embargo against his country was harming civilians and urged the United Nations not to impose additional sanctions, AP reports from United Nations.

Chile and other non-aligned members of the Security Council are calling for an arms embargo against the African nation, but council members are not expected to take immediate action on the proposal. "It would be illogical and unacceptable to penalize the new regime," Burundian Ambassador Nsanze Terence said.

**Italian PM to meet Erbakan Sept 3:** Italian Premier Romano Prodi will meet with Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan Sept 3 in the first visit by a Western leader since an Islamic-led government was installed in Ankara in June, AP reports from Ankara.

An Italian embassy official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Tuesday that talks during Prodi's one-day visit would centre on economic issues. Discussions would also include Turkey's relations with the European Union which it seeks to join, the official said.

**89 sentenced for Anti-Sikh riot:** A court has sentenced 89 people to five years imprisonment for participating in riots against the Sikh minority in 1984 in the aftermath of the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, newspapers said Wednesday, AP reports from New Delhi.

The judgement on Tuesday was the second time in 12 years that people have been sentenced for the violence in which 2,700 people, mostly Sikhs, were killed. Many senior members of the Congress Party of Mrs. Gandhi were accused of triggering riots that started after two Sikh bodyguards shot and killed her on Oct. 31, 1984.

**Bosnian PM visits Turkey:** Bosnian Prime Minister Hasan Muratovic on Tuesday began two days of lobbying in Ankara for economic aid, AP reports from Ankara.

Turkey has promised \$182 million to help rebuild Bosnia over the next four years.

## Chun won't appeal against his death sentence

SEOUL, Aug 28: Former South Korean strongman Chun Doo-Hwan does not want to appeal his death sentence, his aide was quoted as saying today, reports AFP.

MBC television quoted the unidentified aide as saying that Chun told his lawyer Lee Yang-Woo during a prison meeting Tuesday that he did not want to bring his case to the appeals court.

Lee then conveyed Chun's wish to Chun's wife Lee Sun-Ja late Tuesday, the aide said.

The lawyer neither denied nor confirmed the report, saying only that the matter must not be decided upon recklessly.

## Democrats, Republicans have nearly identical goal

CHICAGO, Aug 28: Democrats and Republican have a nearly identical goal for America and the world — they want a strong country leading the quest for world peace, but they have sharply difference views of progress under President Clinton and of what to do in the next four years, reports AP.

"We want an America that is still the world's strongest force for peace and freedom," declares the Democratic Party platform adopted at its national convention Tuesday. Republicans, in nominating former Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole as their candidate two weeks ago in San Diego, pronounced themselves "the party of peace through strength."

Beyond that, the view of the world from the shores of Lake Michigan bares little resemblance to the picture of failure and misdirection painted at the Republican's seaside meeting in southern California.

Both gatherings focused heavily on domestic issues, with no foreign crisis grabbing Americans' attention so far in the campaign. Only a few sentences among the words of some 60 speakers at the Democrats Tuesday platform session touched on foreign affairs provisions. As with the Republicans, the whole platform was adopted quickly without dissent.

But, in contrast with Republicans whose candidate disavowed portions of their conservative mandate, Democrats promised to honour their platform titled "Meeting America's Challenges, Protecting America's Values."

"We Democrats are running on our platform, while Republicans are running away from theirs," said Gov. Zell Miller of Georgia, head of the Democrats' platform committees.

Republicans took credit for ending the Cold War with President's Reagan and Bush, Democrats laud that as a victory of American might and diplomacy and credit Clinton and Vice President Al Gore with "meeting the challenges of this new era of promise and peril."

The two platforms express contrasting attitudes towards Russia, Bosnia and the United Nations and on issues ranging from immigration to national defence.

On Russia, the Democrats say, "We support the continuing evolution of a prosperous and peaceful Russia. And as part of our effort to support we will pursue a relationship in which we seek cooperation when we can, and frankly express disagreements where they exist, such as on Chechnya."

Democratic platform makes no specific proposal for the next states to be admitted, but it backs expansion into Central Europe "in the near future." The Republican platform called for the immediate inclusion of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary.

On Bosnia, Democrats declare that US diplomacy and troops have helped give Bosnia its first real chance for a lasting peace. Republicans declared support for US troops in Bosnia but not the policy that sent them there.

The Democratic platform supports efforts to sign a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty this year and rejects Republican proposals to revive funding for the Star Wars long-range missile.

On NATO expansion, the Democrats support the expansion of NATO to include Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary.

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## Off the Record

### Jail sentence for selling bogus bird

PERTH, Australia: A bird enthusiast was jailed for two years in Australia Tuesday for selling painted parrots, reports AFP.

Denham Peirs, 32, admitted creating what appeared to be rare cinnamon-coloured Indian ringneck parrots by dabbing common green parrots with hair dye and selling them at almost 10,000 dollars (almost 8,000 US) a pair.

Peirs, western Australia's district court was told their real value was only 100 dollars a pair.

The Birdworld bird, plant and aquatic centre in Perth had traded 28,000 dollars in birds for just three pairs of the impostor parrots, the court heard.

Peirs was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for fraud and attempted fraud but will be eligible for parole after serving a third of the sentence.

"I'm completely deceived by a very clever and professional deception," judge Kevin Hammond said.

Birdworld owner Shane Drew said outside the court that Peirs would have got away with the deception if he had not tried to sell a fourth pair of bogus birds about six weeks after selling the first lot.

By that time, an associate of Peirs had blown the whistle on the fraud and police used a telephone trace to track him down.

Peirs already had three local breeders have a look at them and sent photos and videos of the birds to the eastern states for authentication," Drew said.

## Japan's SC orders extension of lease of Okinawa base

TOKYO, Aug 28: Japan's Supreme Court today ordered authorities in Okinawa to extend leases on land occupied by US military bases, removing a major threat to their future, reports Reuters.

The order came in a decision by the court's 15 member grand bench turning down an appeal by Okinawa Governor Masahide Ota against a lower court ruling that he follow central government instructions to sign appropriation documents for plots of land on eight of the 40 US military facilities on the southern Japanese island.

About 75 per cent of US military bases in Japan are located on the island. 625 miles (1,000 km) south of Tokyo.

Democrats claim progress against terrorism and pledge further efforts.