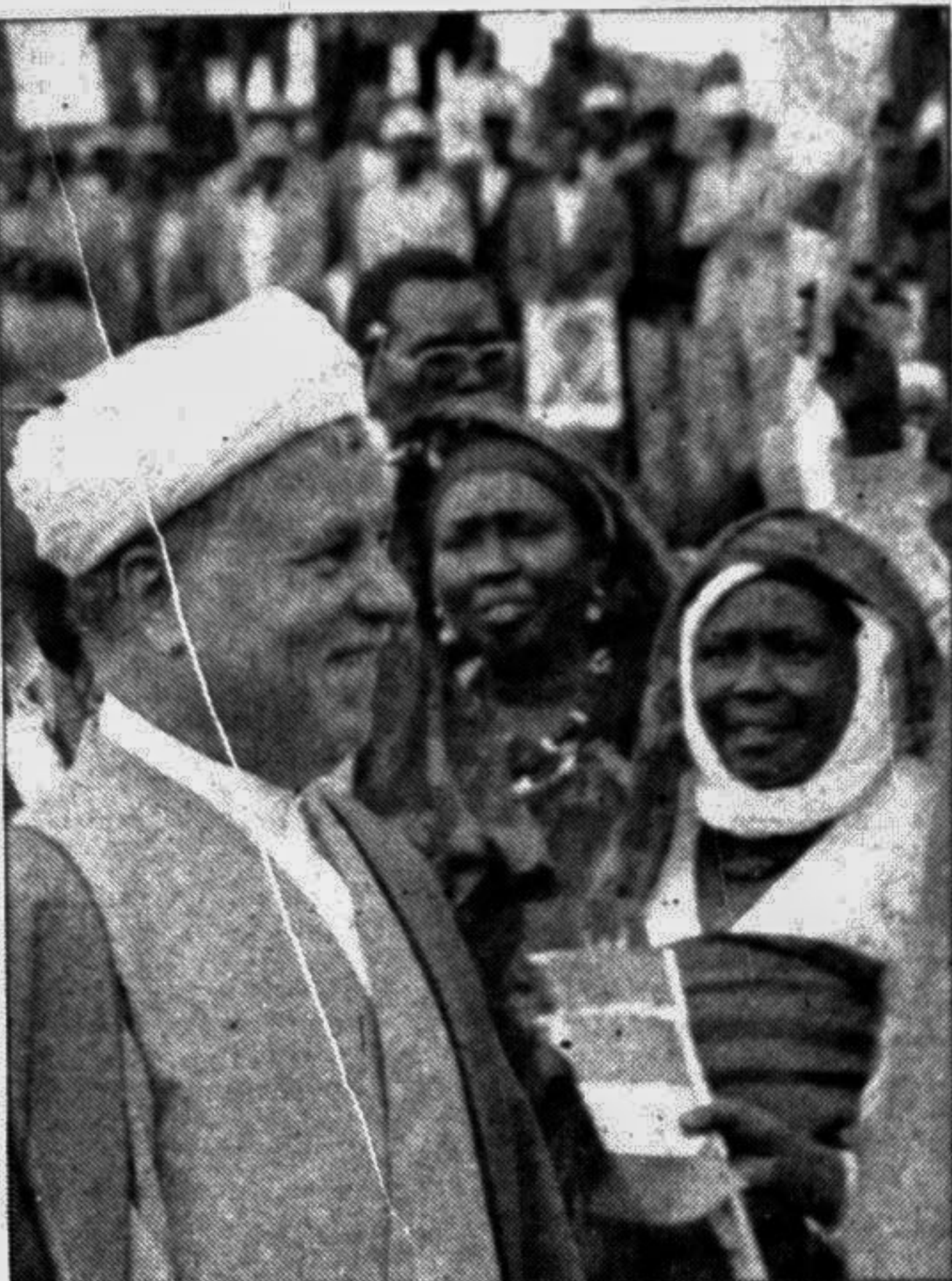


## BRIEFLY



Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani is greeted by local Muslims (Background) and Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi (Out of camera range) at Nairobi airport on Monday. Rafsanjani is at a start of a four-day visit to Kenya. From here he will go to Uganda, Sudan, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

— AFP/UNB photo

**Yeltsin receives treatment:** Boris Yeltsin is feeling fine after completing a round of "diagnostic and preventive" treatments, the ITAR-Tass news agency said Monday, without revealing why the president needed medical care. AP reports from Moscow.

The 65-year-old president appeared briefly on Russian television Monday — for the first time in two weeks — smiling but looking stiff. The footage showed him in casual clothes speaking with Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin at Rus, a hunting lodge 100 kilometres (60 miles) north of Moscow.

**Strong quake rocks Hong Kong:** An intense earthquake was recorded 145 kilometres (90 miles) southwest of the Pacific island of Guam yesterday morning, the Royal Hong Kong Observatory said. Reuter reports from Hong Kong.

The quake, estimated to be 5.7 on the Richter Scale, was recorded at 4.48 am (20.48 GMT Monday). The epicentre was initially determined to be in the vicinity of the Mariana Islands about 145 km southwest of Guam at 12.6°N 143.7°E, the observatory said.



German Marcus Meyer presents the world's most expensive perfume at the "Midora" fair jewellery fair in Leipzig on Monday. A 20-centimetre high egg-shaped crystal glass flacon contains the nameless scent by Faberge. One of only 500 flacons of the perfume will cost about 6,000 German mark.

— AFP/UNB photo

**Palestine frees 120 Hamas men:** The Palestinian self-rule authority freed 120 supporters of the militant Islamic groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad during President Yasser Arafat's visit to the West Bank last week, PLO security sources said on Monday. Reuter reports from Jerusalem.

Arafat visited Ramallah and Nablus from Wednesday through Sunday when he returned to the Gaza Strip self-rule enclave, his base of operations. The source said 22 prisoners were freed from Jenin prison, 14 from Jneid, 36 from Nablus central prison, 36 from lockup in Ramallah and 12 from jail in Bethlehem.

**Gaddafi meets Farrakhan:** Libyan leader Moammar Gaddafi met Monday with black US militant Louis Farrakhan, the officials news agency JANA reported, AFP report from Tripoli.

Farrakhan, head of the Nation of Islam, was in Tripoli to help celebrate the 27th anniversary of the coup that brought Gaddafi to power. He told a press conference in Tripoli Monday that his organisation was "preparing to create a new political force in the United States to fight against the abuse of the rights of blacks and other minorities."

**Road mishap kills 20 in Mexico:** Twenty people died and another 19 were injured, many of them seriously, when a bus, swerved off a country road outside Mexico City and crashed into a parked truck and a pickup, police said, Reuter reports from Cuautla.

The bus, which was carrying poor Mexican workers and students from the capital to the town of Cuautla 45 miles (70 km) to the south, was destroyed. "It left the road and on tipping over crashed into the parked vehicles," Federal highway police commander Marco Antonio Vargas Rodriguez told Reuters television. "Evidently it was travelling at excessive speed."

**Bus mishap claims 31 in China:** A bus carrying peasant labourers plunged off a hillside in southern China, killing 31 people and injuring 41 others, including three still in critical condition, an official newspaper said, AP reports from Beijing.

The bus, with 73 passengers, fell down a 117-metre (386-foot) high slope in Guizhou province early last Friday morning, the Yangcheng Evening News said in a report seen Tuesday in Beijing.

**Delhi appoints new navy chief:** The Indian government appointed a new navy chief amid allegations of inefficiency and favouritism among the top brass, newspapers reported Tuesday, AP says from New Delhi.

Vishnu Bhagwat, a specialist in communications and electronic warfare, was appointed the navy chief Monday night, newspapers said.

**3 Burundian officials fly to Uganda:** Three top Burundian officials and relatives of the head of the new military government flew to Uganda Monday, and the military confirmed reports of fighting between the Tutsi-led army and Hutu rebels in northern Burundi, AP reports from Bujumbura.

## 4 Indian choppers shot down in Siachin Glacier

ISLAMABAD, Sept 3: Pakistan shot down four Indian helicopters after they strayed into its airspace over the disputed Siachin Glacier, officials said today, reports AP.

They didn't say how many casualties resulted from the downed helicopters which apparently happened over the past several weeks.

Usually these helicopters don't carry more than a pilot and one other person, said an army official, who can't be identified under usual briefing rules.

For more than a decade Pakistan and India have been fighting a limited war over the inhospitable Siachin Glacier that rises to a peak of 22,000 feet and is sandwiched between the Karakoram and Himalayan mountain ranges.

The two countries disagree over the location of the border that divides the glacier between India and Pakistan.

Their armies are deployed in posts on the ice capped peaks barely 500 feet apart.

According to The Nation newspaper the last Indian helicopter, a Russian-made Mi-17, was shot down on August 26. It was reportedly ferrying ammu-

nition and supplies to Indian soldiers along the disputed border.

Officials say there are regular fire fights between the two armies on the Siachin but the casualty rate is low and both

## Woman gets life term for burning to death daughter-in-law

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: A New Delhi court has sentenced a woman to life imprisonment for burning to death her daughter-in-law after a row over her dowry, the Times of India said today, reports AFP.

Additional District and Sessions Judge G D Dhanuka Passed the sentence Monday against Devki, who poured kerosene over Darshan in September 1991 and set her on fire the daily said.

The judge also sentenced Devki's daughter to three years hard labour in jail for harassing Darshan.

Most families in India pay huge dowries to marry off their daughters.

## CBI hunts for Sukh Ram's whereabouts

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: The guessing game over the whereabouts of a former Indian minister being sought by police after nearly one million dollars in cash was found at his home went on yesterday, newspapers reported, according to AFP.

Supreme Court lawyer Sunil Kumar Singh, who said he was acting for Sukh Ram, asserted the former telecommunications minister would return from Britain soon after receiving health treatment.

"He is very much keen to come to India as early as possible, event at the cost of his health," Kumar was quoted as saying in comments published on Monday.

But the lawyer added: "I don't know his telephone number nor the London address. I also do not know details of his health."

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) wants to question Sukh Ram after a police raid on his New Delhi-based home on August 16 reportedly uncovered 30 million rupees (\$57,000 dollars).

## Christians protest against govt-MNLF accord

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines, Sept 3: About 1,000 Christians, led by 12 priests, buried a coffin symbolising the death of democracy Tuesday in a rally against a peace agreement signed a day earlier by the government and Muslim rebels, reports AP.

The Rev Dominador Dagondon, vicar-general of the archdiocese of Zamboanga, said protesters felt their concerns were ignored by President Fidel Ramos in the pact.

Offices and schools closed while buses and passenger jeeps refused to play their routes in support of the protest.

"For the church, the voice of the people is the voice of God," Dagondon said.

## China worried over SA's stance on Taiwan

BEIJING Sept 3: China expressed grave concern Tuesday over remarks by South African President Nelson Mandela that he wants closer relations with both China and its arch-rival Taiwan, reports AP.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Guofang said South Africa could never normalise relations with China as long as it continues to recognize Taiwan, which Beijing regards as a rebel province to be isolated diplomatically.

"The South African leader went so far as to call Taiwan a 'country' and preached 'dual recognition,'" the official China Daily newspaper quoted Shen as saying.

"We are greatly concerned," Shen said.

Last week, during a visit by Taiwanese Vice Premier Hsu Li-teh, Mandela said South Africa intends to keep its formal ties with Taiwan while seeking similar relations with China.

GROZNY, Russia, Sept 3: Musa and his pal Ali should have been starting the seventh grade on Monday. Instead, the ragged pair spent the day begging at street corners in the bombed-out Chechen capital and ruined buildings for bullets and grenades — which they like to explode by tossing them into fires, reports AP.

As a new year of classes begins in much of the world, school is not foremost in the minds of Chechen children. They have no choice — every school in the pulverised city has been destroyed or shut down.

"We have nothing to eat, practically no clothes, nowhere to go," said 12-year-old Musa Magomadov, shrugging, his face, hands and clothes smeared with grime.



France's first female cosmonaut Calodie Andre-Deshays (C) is flanked by her fellow cosmonauts Yuri Usachev and Yuri Onufryenko after landing 200 km from the city of Karaganda, on Monday. Andre-Deshays spent 14 days of her 16-day adventure aboard the Russian orbiting Mir space station conducting a series of medical, biological, physical and technological experiments prepared by some 40 French laboratories and organisations.

— AFP/UNB photo

## 'Yeltsin gives full backing to Lebed's accord on Chechnya'

MOSCOW, Sept 3: Russian President Boris Yeltsin has given his full backing to the peace accord security council chief Alexander Lebed signed in Chechnya, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin said today, reports AFP.

ITAR-Tass news agency quoted Chernomyrdin as saying Yeltsin had approved the accord signed by Lebed and Chechen separatist chief of staff Aslan Maskhadov, which notably delays the issue of Chechnya's independence for five years.

Lebed himself however told a news conference he did not know of Yeltsin's official position on the accord.

Earlier report says: Russian Prime Ministers Viktor Chernomyrdin has questioned the price of a Chechen peace accord

while President Boris Yeltsin maintains a dogged silence about the plan to end a devastating 20 month war, reports Reuter.

Yeltsin's security chief Alexander Lebed told Republic Television on Monday that he had made "yet another attempt" to telephone Yeltsin to discuss the accord he concluded with rebels on Saturday. He had been told, however, to try again later.

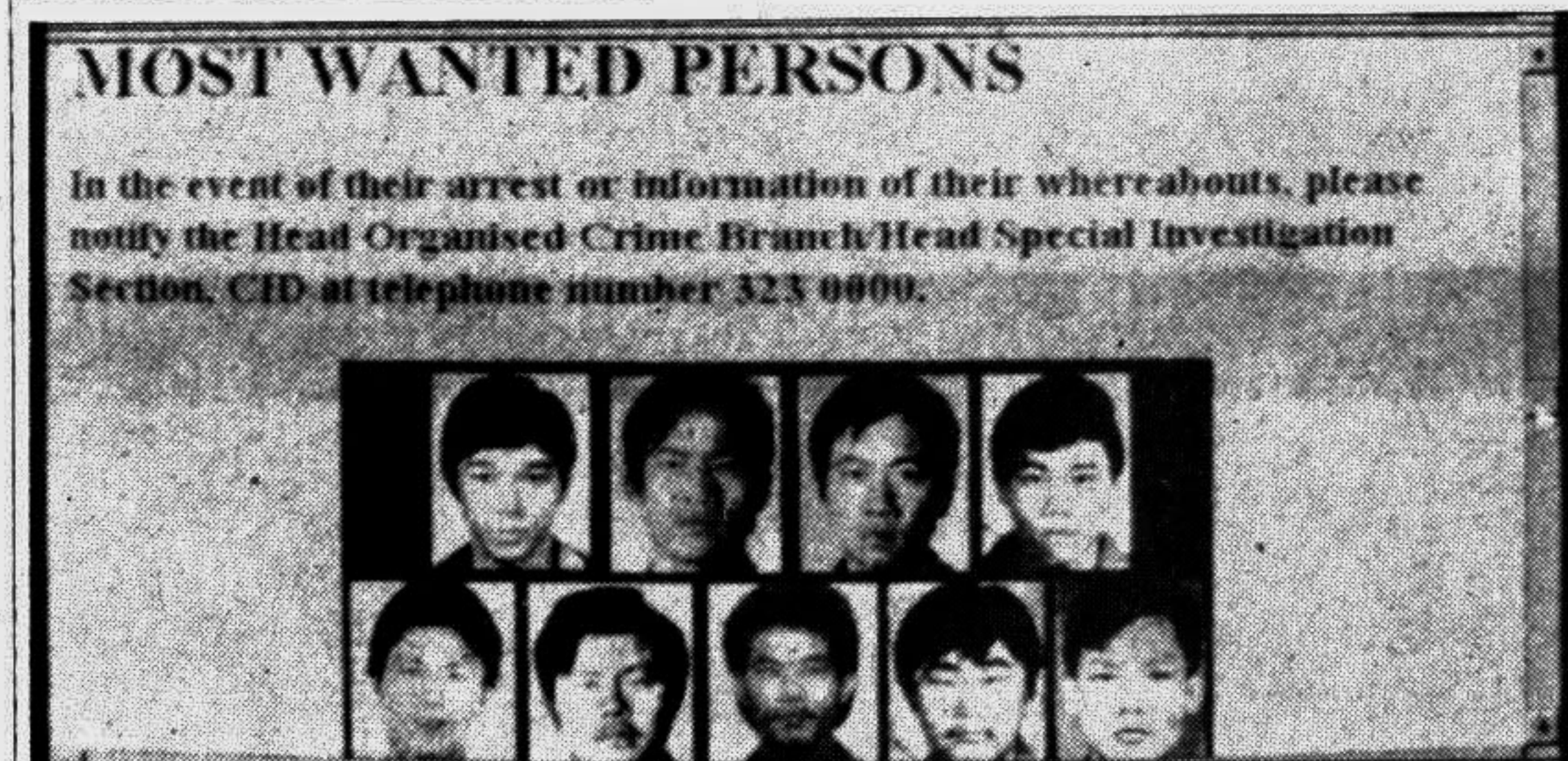
Lebed's frustration over the absence of top-level public backing for his deal shone through his comment. But he might suppose the televised scenes of celebration among rebels in Chechnya can hardly have warmed hearts in the Kremlin.

The former paratroop general, for his efforts, was granted a meeting with Chernomyrdin on Monday. The premier then briefed Yeltsin on the deal that has ended fighting in the rebel region.

Lebed's press office said Chernomyrdin had backed the agreement, but Chernomyrdin's press secretary made no mention of his chief endorsing the deal. The premier, he said, had certain reservations about it.

Interfax news agency quoted Chernomyrdin's spokesman as saying Russia's territorial integrity was paramount and that "the political price of the deal" had yet to be discussed.

He was clearly referring to the issue of Russia's sovereign control over Chechnya — the heart of the conflict launched in December 1994 when Moscow sent troops to quell Chechnya's three-year independence bid.



A picture taken off the Internet web site of the Singapore police on Tuesday shows Singapore's most wanted men in a line-up. Pictures and particulars of nine men wanted in the city-state for such crimes as murder and robbery were published in the global computer network to enlist the help of Internet surfers in neighbouring countries where the fugitives might have fled.

— AFP/UNB photo

## Nigerian govt threatens to close universities

LAGOS, Nigeria, Sept 3: Unable to break a four-month strike by university professors, Nigeria's military government published a warning Monday that the schools would be closed and strikers fired unless they returned to work, reports AP.

The warning, which appeared in the state-owned Times newspaper of Nigeria, gave professors until Tuesday to comply. It said university chancellors had been told of the planned shutdowns and firings.

There are more than 12,000 university professors in Nigeria. Most belong to the striking union.

Gen. Sani Abacha's government declared the strike, which began April 9, illegal, and on August 23 it banned the three unions representing strikers and seized their assets.

Professors say there are a variety of problems in the educational system, which they blame on government mismanagement and neglect. Their main gripe is pay, which at 663 dollars per year, they claim is a fraction of the African average.

Many students and administrative staff support the strike, blaming professors' poor pay and overcrowded classrooms for declining standards among the country's 39 university campuses.

## Arafat holds talks with Israeli negotiator

JERUSALEM, Sept 3: Palestinian President Yasser Arafat held talks stretching into early this morning with an Israeli negotiator on arranging his first summit with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, PLO officials said, reports Reuter.

The late-night session with Netanyahu's representative Yitzhak Molho followed a warning by Arafat he would seek international arbitration if Israeli-PLO attempts to resume full-fledged peace negotiations faltered.

"We are committed to the peace process and we are seeking through all means to maintain and protect it and in case it faces difficulties, we are going to seek arbitration," Arafat told Reuters by telephone from Gaza. He did not elaborate.

Asked about Arafat's comments, a spokesman for Netanyahu rejected arbitration and said the Palestinian leader was trying to pressure Israel during negotiations.

The Palestinians are seeking a clear commitment from Netanyahu to implement all outstanding issues in Israel-PLO peace deals, such as Israeli troop re deployment from Hebron and other parts of the West Bank, a PLO official said.

An agreement on such a peace formula, a top PLO negotiator said, would be followed

'within hours' by an Arafat-Netanyahu meeting.

Asked how soon the men might meet, Netanyahu's aide and peace negotiator Dore Gold told CNN: "It really of course depends on the content of the understandings that are reached."

Netanyahu, who won election in May pledging not to trade occupied land for peace, has said security concerns dictated a reexamination of where Israeli troops would be stationed in Hebron, home to 400 Jewish settlers and 100,000 Palestinians.

PLO officials have said they would not renegotiate the redeployment agreed by the previous Israeli government led by former Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

Israel and the PLO have been holding talks in the Tel Aviv apartment of Terje Larsen, a Norwegian and the UN's top official in Palestinian self-rule areas.

Gold called the tone of those negotiations very productive and said Israel's new government and the PLO realised they had to move cautiously.

"I think both sides understand that we are basically in this boat together. If either of us take rash decisions, we can sink the boat," he told CNN.

## Troops capture 8 posts from Taliban

KABUL, Afghanistan, Sept 3: Government soldiers on Tuesday claimed to have captured eight posts from rival Taliban troops, southwest of the Afghan capital, reports AP.

The fighting began Monday forcing the closure of a key road to Maidan Shahr, about 45 kilometres (15 miles) southwest of the city.

The road opened late Tuesday morning but several truck drivers, who made the journey to Maidan Shahr and back, said the road was littered with burned out tanks and there were giant gouges in the middle of the road from government bombs.

A Defence Ministry spokesman said there were 17 casualties among the Taliban and three among government troops.

The government also captured three Taliban prisoners and a sizeable cache of weapons and ammunition, said Abdul

Ghafari Rashidi, Defence Ministry spokesman.

The Taliban army of former religious students turned guerrilla fighters is deployed south and east of the capital.

They have been trying to overthrow President Burhanuddin Rabbani's coalition government and establish a strict Islamic regime.

Muslim rebels overthrew the communist regime in 1992 but almost immediately began fighting each other.

Their relentless feuding has virtually destroyed the capital, leaving 70 per cent of it in ruins, more than 25,000 people dead and another 750,000 refugees in their own country.

It's not clear what will end the fighting in Afghanistan. All the groups espouse the establishment of an Islamic government but they can't agree on the shape it should take or who should lead it.

On Monday, five people, including a seven-year-old girl was killed.

## Off the Record

## Robert Bruce's 'braveheart' discovered

LONDON: Just call him Braveheart 11. Scottish conservationists think they have found the mummified heart of Robert the Bruce, the legendary 14th-century Scottish king who heroically resisted the English and won independence for his native land, reports AP.

Discovered in a medieval casket, the heart proves that Bruce's supporters honoured his dying wish to be buried at Melrose Abbey in the southeastern corner of Scotland, conservationists said Monday.

## Damaged gene leads to skin cancer

NEW YORK: Scientists have more evidence that a particular gene stands guard against the most common cancer in people, and that damage in the gene leads to skin cancer, reports AP.

At least 750,000 Americans a year get the skin cancer, called basal cell carcinoma. It is highly curable if treated early, and deaths are rare.

The new work might lead to a substance that could be smeared on the skin cancers to stand in for the damaged gene, and so provide a treatment, said Dr Mae Gailani of the Yale University School of Medicine.

In June, scientists reported that a gene called "patched" was damaged in some cases of the basal cell cancer. That suggested that the gene normally suppresses such tumors, and that the cancers proceed only after that suppression is lost.

The gene also was shown to be mutated in an inherited disease that includes lots of basal cell cancers.

## Bid to bring antiquities to people

ANCIENT EPIDHAVEROS, Greece: Buried in darkness for more than 23 centuries, a small theatre in this old port town came to life this year as part of an effort to forge a tangible link between ancient and modern times, reports AP.

"After all these centuries we are trying to give it life, to make it real. Here the connection to the past is tangible and something you can touch and can touch you," said archeologist Evangelia Protonotariou Delakis.

The small 4th century B.C. amphitheatre, which in ancient times could seat an estimated 5,000 to 6,000 people, this summer hosted nearly 600 people during weekend musical events in restored sections.

First discovered by Delakis in 1970, the "Little Theatre" as it is called, is overshadowed by the famous near by ancient theatre of Epidhauron, which seats about 16,000 and has hosted theatrical events since 1954.

The decision to allow the use of the Little Theatre is part of an attempt by the Culture Ministry to bring people closer to some of the lesser known ancient theatres and medieval castles around the country.

Their parents were killed or disappeared in the war and they sleep in half-abandoned apartment buildings where people offer them space.

Rizvan Madar, a 7-year-old orphan tagging along with the big kids, picked up a piece of chalk and started drawing idly on the still-intact blackboard. First a tank, then a helicopter, then a woman — underneath which he wrote "Mama."

All three boys had no hesitation when asked what they wanted to be when they grow up: armed fighters.

Across the city, the head of another wrecked school warned curiosity-seekers to stay away from the playground. One boy had already stepped on a mine there and been hospitalised.

A boy approached the school director, Hasan Gakuyev, and

asked hopefully "Is school opening soon?"

Gakuyev, 55, smiled sadly and shook his head.

Last year, children attended morning classes in the half-decayed building with the Russians' permission, enduring frosty conditions in a building with no heat and makeshift celophane windows.

The vast majority of the city's children are now idle except for a few who study at home with their parents or grandparents.

"I feel sad for these children," Gakuyev said. "Many of them saw blood. They saw death. Many lost their parents, their brothers and sisters."

"They have become stronger in some ways, harder. But they aren't getting an education."

## After ceasefire — Chechen children roaming over ruins of war

"We can't go to school." Chechen villages also have lost schoolhouses in the nearly 21-month-old war. But on the traditional first day, with a 10-day-old truce holding firm, many schools outside Grozny reopened on schedule despite the fact that teachers remain unpaid for much of last year's work.

All along the roads of the tiny republic, girls with bows in their hair and boys lugging Ninja Turtle and Lion King backpacks clutched bouquets of flowers for their teachers as their parents escorted them to school.

Grozny, however, untold thousands of children around ground zero of the war had no such distractions from their grim surroundings.

Some roamed the central market — buying, selling or begging. Others helped their families clean the wreckage from the last round of deadly fighting and bombing.

A boy wearing the green headband of Islamic fighters 'clutched a make-believe gun as he rode a rickety bike down a dusty brick-strewn street.

They are the untalented casualties of the war.

Some schools in the city with a pre-war population of 400,000 struggled back into operation last year, often being repaired under the assumption the worst was over. But after last month's fierce battle for Grozny, few are intact.

One such middle school in the city tells the war's savage tale. The roof has a gaping hole

from a grenade or missile. The facade is smashed open, all the windows are broken and the outer walls are riddled with bullet holes. The charred remains of three Russian tanks lie within a half-block.

Luisa Ausheva, a geography teacher, gazed in pain at the silent hulk.

"A person can't even imagine that somebody would do this," said the 45-year-old woman, just back in the city after fleeing the last Russian bombing.

"Awful. Terrible. I can't even talk about it," Sah said, her voice catching before she turned and hurried away.

Inside, Musa and his buddy Ali Latayev wandered the rubble-strewn hallways and devastated classrooms.

They are even unluckier than most Grozny children.