# US makes first contact with Taliban

ISLAMABAD, Oct 3: US diplomats have made their first contact with Taliban representatives in Islamabad since the hardline Islamic militia captured the Afghan capital Kabul six days ago, a senior Afghan diplomat said today, reports

Maulavi Abdul Wahab ap-pointed charge d'affaires at the Afghan embassy in Islamabad after the September 27 ouster of the Kabul government, de-scribed the meeting as "fruit-

He said Dan Mozena, deputy political counselor at the US embassy in Islamabad, accompanied by another diplomat, met him for about one hour Wednesday.

It was a "positive" meeting held in a "friendly atmosphere" Wahab told AFP.

The talks showed US willingness to have a rapport with the new government in Kabul, the Afghan diplomat observed. He said Washington also

plans to send a US diplomat for talks with Taliban leaders in Kabul However, the Taliban leaders want the situation on

ground to stabilise before they

Kabul, he said. Earlier reports from - Washington said, the United States is pressing the ruling Afghan faction to work toward

national reconciliation. Also, the US is raising con-

cern about respect for human rights women's rights international terrorism and narcotics. an official who spoke on condition of anonymity said in Washington on Wednesday. "We are still in wait-and-see

mode." the official added. He said a US diplomat may travel to the Taliban stronghold of Kandahar in the upcoming weeks to continue talks but no final arrangements have been made.

AP adds: Reflecting growing alarm in Russia over the Islamic militants' victory in Afghanistan, President Boris Yeltsin called a regional sum-mit and held talks with his foreign minister on the crisis on Wednesday.

Russia sees Afghanistan as a source of militant Islamic fundamentalism threatening to destabilise the former Soviet republics of Central Asia along its southern flank.

On Yeltsin's initiative, plans were in the works Wednesday for a summit of Central Asian leaders to discuss ways of strengthening the defence of the countries' southern borders.

Yeltsin is sending Prime welcome foreign dignitaries in Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin to represent Russia at the meeting beginning Friday in Almaty, the capital of Kazakstan, the ITAR-Tass news

The president met with Foreign Minister Yevgeny Pri-makov to discuss the crisis. Yeltsin spokesman Pyotr Tarasov gave no details of their

meeting. Of particular concern to Russia is the border between Afghanistan and the former Soviet republic of Tajikistan. where Russia has 25,000 troops propping up the hard-line Tajik government.

The Russian troops clash frequently along with rugged frontier with Tajik rebels based in Afghanistan.

cast ballots.

or Pakistan.

With a population of 140

Mayawati said her Bahujan

million people. Uttar Pradesh

is a more populous than Japan

Samaj Party (BSP), represent-

ing the dalits, or former Hindu

untouchables, would sweep the

polls with the Congress Party of

former prime minister P V

Narasimha Rao as its junior

with recent opinion polls that

have given an edge to the right-

Party India's main opposition

group that has made Uttar

four of the 164 races in the fray

on Thursday, three of them due

to violence. Those elections will

be held on October 9, two days

after the scheduled final phase

MOSCOW, Oct 3: President

Boris Yeltsin today discusses

the faltering Chechnya peace

process face-to-face with his

ambitious security chief

Alexander Lebed for the first

time amid a barrage of attacks

ing for heart surgery, came un-

der fire from opposition leaders

in parliament on Wednesday

for refusing to give up power de-spite his health problems.

would meet Lebed - who signed

controversial peace deal with

Chechnya's rebels - in the cen-

tral clinical hospital where he

has been for the past two weeks.

Yeltsin faces a new wave of

criticism today - the third an-

niversary of a rebellion by the

old parliament which he put

Lebed walked out of the be-

ginning of a new parliamentary

session on Wednesday after

down with tanks.

Aside from Chechnya,

preparing for his operation.

His press service said he

Yeltsin, in hospital prepar-

on both men, report Reuter.

The government canceled

Pradesh its main base.

ist Hindu Bharatiya Janata

Her prediction was at odds

Moscow wants to prevent the Taliban, the Islamic fundamentalist army that now controls much of Afghanistan, from joining up with the Tajik

rebels, the theory goes, it could cause a domino effect in Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmentis-

If Tajikistan fell to Islamic

tan and Uzbekistan, which also have largely Muslim popula-

But Primakov said in an interview aired by Russia's independent NTV television Wednesday night that he's not sure whether Moscow should support forces that are opposed to the Taliban.

"We do not sympathise with the Talibs," the Interfax news agency quoted him as saying. Ex chief minister Mayawati says

## BSP to win local polls in Uttar Pradesh

LUCKNOW (India). Oct 3: A of the polls. party representing the lowest Tens of thousands of Hindu castes predicted on paramilitary troops have been deployed to guard the elections that began on Monday in the Thursday it would win local polls in India's most populous state that are regarded as crucial for Prime Minister III) Police last week clamped an

Deve Gowda's government, rearound-the-clock curfew on the Muslim-majority old quarter of ports Reuter. "We are heading for an out-Lucknow, the state capital and right victory to upset everyone's the main base of the BJP. calculations." former Uttar The polls have Deve Gowda's Pradesh chief minister fractious United Front taking Mayawati told Reuters after the on the Congress Party, which

Yandarbiyev in Moscow for talks

Yeltsin, Lebed discuss

Chechnya peace process

backs his minority government state on Thursday began the in New Delhi but is allied with second phase of three-stage assembly elections. the BSP in Uttar Pradesh, and In the state capital of Lucthe BJP in a three-way battle know, voters queued up early to for the state's 425-seat lower house.

> Politicians said the polls, in which 90 million people are eli-gible to vote, would test Deve Gowda's ability to overcome a challenge by the BJP, India's main opposition group and which is campaigning for midterm parliamentary polls.

> The BJP's campaign to build a Hindu temple at the site of a 16th century mosque in Uttar Pradesh catapulted it to power in several north Indian states and made it the main opposition party in parliament in

Analysts say the state, once a Congress bastion, could boost a recent trend of coalition politics that helped Deve Gowda form a minority government in June Congress has ruled India for all out four years since independence in 1947.

deputies heckled and jeered him

for the agreement he signed

with Chechnya's rebels in Au-

gust to end 21 months of fight-

ing which killed tens of thou-

withdrawal of Russian troops

from the region envisaged by

the deal is proceeding slowly

amid concern in Moscow that

the rebels have got away with

chief Alexander Lebed was

blasted in parliament for his

peace deal with Chechen sepa-

ratists, the rebel leader arrived

in Moscow for a round of high-

the separatists' political leader.

was scheduled to meet with both

Lebed and with Prime Minister

see President Boris Yeltsin for

the first time since he signed

Lebed was also supposed to

Viktor Chernomyrdin.

the accord last August.

Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev,

AP adds: A day after security

too much.

level talks.

A ceasefire had held but the



Palestinian Liberation Organisation chairman Yasser Arafat (L), and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (R) shake hands as they leave the White House as US President Bill Clinton (C) watches following their Wednesday meetings for peace at the White House. The leaders met to discuss recent street fighting in the Old City of Jerusalem.

- AFP/UNB photo

Emergency White House summit

# Israel claims victory but Palestinians call it failure

JERUSALEM, Oct 3: Israel claimed victory at an emergency White House summit aimed at quelling the explosion of violence in the Middle East. but Palestinians called it a failure which could plunge the region further into turmoil. Fe-

ports Reuter. The results of the summit are a great success from the point of view of the government of Israel. Israeli cabinet secretary Danny Naven told Israel Radio from Washington after the Wednesday talks.

"The peace process is on the verge of collapse," said Mustafa Natsheh, Palestinian mayor of Hebron on the West Bank.

"Unless international and Arab public opinion and Israeli peace groups move, the area will not witness any calm and the cycle of violence will return

anew," he said. President Bill Clinton told a White House news conference after the two-day summit that Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israel's new rightwing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had failed to resolve their differences. He acknowledged the Middle East peace process was still in crisis.

He said the two sides had agreed to resume immediate peace talks focusing on an Israeli pullback from Hebron, but this was far less than the immediate Israeli redeployment from the flashpoint city which Arafat had demanded.

cause of Israeli intransigence." Hasan Asfour, a PLO negotiator, told Reuters. "I hope that the Arab nation has realised what

and 15 Israeli soldiers in recent

adviser, said Clinton had done his best to salvage the summit. "But it is clear, and this is my personal opinion, that with Netanyahu it is easier to enter a war than to reach peace," he

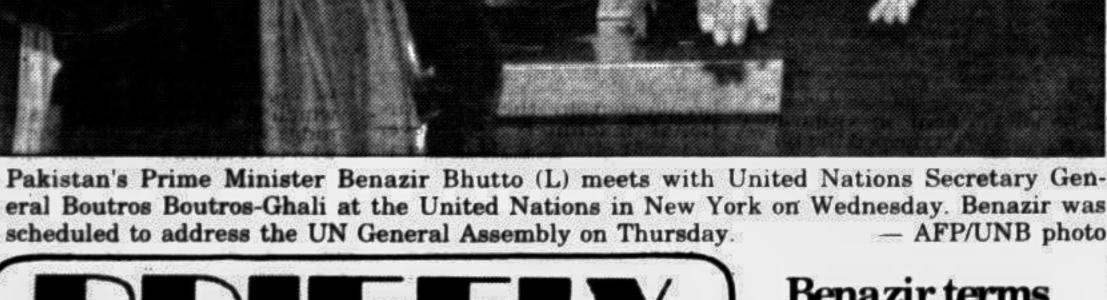
bility for a war. I hope I am wrong.

tough stance. Israel has ringed Pales-

Israel soldiers shot stonethrowing protesters.

from Washington. "The look on Arafat's face is very gloomy," said Palestinian

The situation is miserable and does not call for optimism. There is deep disappointment



Belarus to host centre for refugees: Belarus offered on Wednesday to host a permanent centre under UN auspices to deal with the problems of refugees and migrants in Eastern Europe, AP reports from United Nations.

"The problem of refugees, displaced persons and repatriates is, also, very acute today," Belarus Foreign Minister Uladzimir Syanko told the UN General Assembly

"I believe that the establishment, under the aegis of the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees, of a permanent regional center on migratory problems and refugees of the countries of Eastern Europe could make a considerable contribution," he added.

Landslide claims 16 in Indonesia: The death toll in a landslide on Batam Island near Singapore has risen to at least 16, and seven villagers are missing, the official Antara news agency said Thursday. AP reports from Jakarta.

Among those reported dead were five members of a family who were killed as they slept when the landslide triggered by torrential rains hit their house early Wednesday. Four people are hospitalised, including a daughter of the family who survived.

China charges people for trash:
Chinese cities are beginning to charge people for trash, with some paying between 1.5 yuan (18 US cents) and 25 yuan (dlrs 3) a month depending on how much they dump, an official newspaper said Thursday, AP reports from Beijing The experimental system is aimed at encouraging recycling

and easing the cost to the government of waste treatment, the China Daily said. Money collected is used to treat trash and improve sanitation facilities.

### Ex-Quebec PM Bourassa dies: Robert Bourassa, a foe of separatism who was premier of Quebec during some of its most tumultuous political crises, died of cancer

Wednesday. He was 63. AP reports from Montreal. Bourassa died at Montreal's Notre-Dame Hospital, which he entered after being diagnosed with malignant melanoma in June It was his third bout with skin cancer since he was first diagnosed with it in 1990.

Bourassa was elected four times as Quebec's premier, serving from 1970 to 1976 and from 1985 to 1994.

### Benazir terms polls in Kashmir a sham

will, reports AFP.

"India has tried to divert world attention by initiating a so-called political process by holding sham elections. Benazir told Muslim diplomats during a meeting of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

"But the presence of over 600 000 military and paramiliinitiate a dialogue with the all political process is," she added.

### ASEAN divided over Myanmar junta's

crackdown KUALA LUMPUR Oct 3:

Southeast Asian countries admitted Thursday they were divided over Myanmar after the latest military crackdown on the opposition, but said there would no immediate change in its constructive engagement policy reports AFP

Abdullah said ASEAN mem bers had expressed concern over latest development in Myan-

- AFP/UNB photo

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 3: Pakistan's Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said Wednesday the just-concluded elections in the Kashmir region were a sham because India's heavy concentration of troops and repressive laws had not permitted a genuine expression of popular

tary forces, the continuation of repressive laws, the failure to parties conference, or to release hundreds of activists shows how hollow even the so-called

# power station in northwest

COLOMBO, Oct 3 Tamil Tiger rebels blasted a telecommunication facility and a small power station in northwest Sri Lanka, killing four security personnel, official sources said

today, reports AFP. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) guerillas blew up the telephone building in Mannar district on Wednesday night, officials said adding that two constables were killed

The Tigers simultaneously blasted the power station in the area and two soldiers on guard there were shot dead, the sources said.

another communications tower at the northern town of Kilinochchi just before they were driven out of the area by government forces.

rebels have escalated guerilla strikes against security forces who captured Kilinochchi, the final Tiger bastion, on Sunday after a battle that killed 1,000 on both sides.

ment said the Tigers continued to fire mortar bombs at Kilinochchi on Wednesday but

A Defence Ministry state-

independence in the island's northern and eastern regions.

Another report from New Delhi says, more than 300 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees arrived in southern India late Tuesday. two days after a bastion of Tamil separatist guerillas in northern Sri Lanka fell to government troops. The Press Trust of India

news agency on Wednesday said 346 refugees arrived on four boats at the southern town of Rameswaram, separated from the island by a narrow strip of sea called the Palk Straits. A government officials said the refugees - from 139 families

### 'Supercluster' of galaxies found

ORONO, Maine, Oct 3: University of Maine astronomers have discovered a "supercluster" of galaxies that is among the largest yet found, reports AP.

The supercluster consists of a string of 22 clusters of galaxies spread out over a distance between 1 billion and 2 billion light years from Earth in the southern constellation Aquarius. It is marked by an unusually dense knot of six clusters.

— were taken to a camp near

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) separatist group lost their stronghold of Kilinochchi on Sunday.

Lankan Tamils fled to Tamil Nadu, where Rameswaram is located, in a massive exodus after hundreds of Tamils were slaughtered in ethnic violence in Colombo in July 1983. Tamil Nadu is home to 55

Gandhi's assassination near here in 1991, some political parties still back their cause. Earlier report says. Tamil Tiger rebels sabotaged a

ficials said today

The Defence Ministry in a statement said that the Tigers continued to fire mortar bombs at Kilinochchi for a second day Wednesday but that troops suffered no casualties in the longrange bombardment.

"The summit has failed beawaits us.

Besides a Hebron pullback, Arafat had demanded that Netanyahu close a tunnel near Muslim shrines in Arab Jerusalem which sparked violence that has killed 58 Arabs

Arafat, who looked grim and said nothing at the news conference with Clinton, came

away empty-handed. Khaled Salam, a close Arafat

told Reuters. "This is a man whose policies are providing every possi-

Right-wing Israelis and Jewish settlers in Palestinian areas welcomed Netanyahu's

tinian-ruled towns with Tanis and put the army on alert since unprecedented gunbattles with Arafat's lightly-armed police. who said they opened fire after

Israeli security officials fear that Palestinian anger at the slow pace of self-rule could again erupt in violence because of the lack of concrete gains

legislator Dalal Salameh from Nablus.

as far as the tunnel is concerned," he said

# 346 Tamil refugees arrive in southern India

# Tigers blast telecom facility,

and another wounded.

Last week, the LTTE blasted

Defence officials said the

troops suffered no casualties. The Tigers on Wednesday admitted for the first time that the military had entered Kilinochchi but did not say when.

The Tiger guerillas are leading a protracted campaign for Rameswaram.

Several thousand Sri

million Indian Tamils. Although support to the LTTE has died down in Tamil Nadu since the Tigers were blamed for former Indian premier Rajiv

telecommunications tower in northwestern Sri Lanka and killed two constables as part of stepped-up guerilla attacks, of-

Defence officials said the rebels have escalated hit-andrun attacks against the troops that captured Kilinochchi on Sunday after a ferocious battle

Dolly Parton stands with the award she won during the Country Music Awards on Wednesday at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville TN. Parton won for Vocal Event of the Year with "I Will Always Love You" with special Guest Vince Gill. - AFP/UNB photo

# Farooq Abdullah failed as chief minister'

SRINAGAR. Oct 3: Faroog 1987 in a controversial poll al-Abdullah, set to become chief liance with India's Congress minister of India's strife-torn Jammu and Kashmir state, is returning from the political wilderness to walk a tightrope between separatists and federal politicians in New Delhi, re-

ports Reuter. His National Conference Party emphatically won last month's state elections, results showed on Wednesday. But there are many in

Kashmir who say the 62-year-

old leader failed the test during two previous tenures as chief minister. "He cannot solve anything." said lawyer and separatist leader Pir Hafizullah Makhdoomi, who argued that Faroog's party had alienated many former supporters. "He

has come into the political process only to save his own party." The British trained doctor with a taste for the high life was last elected chief minister in

Party, which many Kashmiris say sowed the seeds of a rebellion in 1990. Abdullah was accused by rivals of rigging the elections.

which critics say forced rivals to support separatism. "In a way he is responsible for militancy, because this led his rivals to become separatists or militants." a shopkeeper in

nagar said. "But this time, voters had no option. The National Conference is the only truly Kashmiri party.

the state's summer capital Sri-

New Delhi dismissed Abdullah's government in 1990, saying he was soft on rebels, and deployed tens of thousands of soldiers and paramilitary troops. Since then, police and hospital sources estimate 20,000 people have died in the

violence. Despite widespread disen-



chantment with his rule, Ab-

dullah remains a towering leader in the state, thanks mainly to his father. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. For most Kashmiris, Faroog Abdullah still wears the mantle

mir", who dominated regional politics for half a century much of it from jail, before dying in 1982. There is a major responsibility on me and my party to deliver the goods." Abdullah

told Reuters on Wednesday. The National Conference stayed out of general elections in May, saying the federal government then led by Congress. was not seriously committed to granting Kashmir greater autonomy. But Prime Minister HD

Deve Gowda's centre-left coali

tion pledged 'maximum auton-

omy" after assuming power in

Abdullah has said he wants the restoration of powers which before 1952 lay in the state's hands but which have since been seized by the federal government.

The Indian constitution

gives the state nominal charge

and carries the credibility of of all areas but communicahis father, the "Lion of Kash- tions defence and foreign relations. The constitution also gave

the state the right to select its

own Sadar-e-Riyasat, or president, who could not be dismissed by New Delhi without the state government's consent. "Disco Farooq," whose wife is English, has a penchant for night life and spent much of the

past six years in London, stir-

ring animosity among some

Kashmiris. Many Kashmiri villagers remember him for driving a famous indian film star on a scooter along the hilly roads of the Pahalgam holiday resort in the early 1980s. He also has a tough streak.

Recently he said separatists "must be made to suffer". Today he pledge to crack down on armed militants. But he also held out an olive branch to unarmed separatists, saying he hoped for talks with them.

### Moscow police raid mosque MOSCOW, Oct 3: Police

commandos have raided Moscow's main mosque, outraging Muslim leaders who say a number of worshipers were beaten and jailed, reports AP. City officials say they have opened an internal investiga-

time on Tuesday evening. Muslim leaders said Moscow police had never entered a mosque before.

tion into the incident, which

took place at right before prayer

"This is a mosque," deputy Imam Farid Sayfulin told the Moscow Times. "I don't know what people do outside it but inside they're not even allowed to wear dirty

socks. This is not the place to

catch them committing crimes." Several worshipers told the Moscow Times they were beaten on the way to the police station, a charge police deny.

The worshipers, most people from the northern Caucasus. Central Asia and Somalia.

## 'Di vowed to destroy Charles'

LONDON, Oct 3: A new book that began serialisation Thursday says Princess Diana vowed Prince Charles never becomes king and that the queen is a political leftist, reports AFP.

"The Queen: A Biography of Elizabeth II" by Professor Ben Pimlott quotes an unidentified friend of Charles as saying Diana told the prince: "You will never be king. I shall destroy

The book, which began seri alisation in the London news paper the independent ahead of its October 14 publication date. says Diana made the threat during the couple's lengthy wrangle over divorce after they separated in December 1992. Charles, 47, and Diana, 35,

divorced August 28. Pimlott made the disclosure in the passage in the book dealing with Diana's BSC television interview last November in which she questioned Charles suitability to become

king. Diana said in the inter-

acter. I would think that the top job. as I call it, would bring to do her best to make sure enormous limitations to him. and I don't know whether he could adapt to that. Some newspapers have suggested Charles should step aside

view: "Because I know the char-

his two sons, become king. But Charles is reported determined to succeed his mother, who came to the throne in 1952. Pimlott teaches politics and history at London's Birkbeck College. His previous book include a study of the late Labour

Party prime minister Harold

when his 70-year-old mother

the queen dies and lets 14-year-

old Prince William, the elder of

Wilson. The book says that throughout her reign, the queen has used her influence to push governments more to the left. As constitutional monarch, she is formally committed to political neutrality. But Pimlott writes: "In her own way, she is a bit of a

lefty.