

## Nepali parliament okays bill to set up HR commission

KATHMANDU, Oct 12: The Nepali Parliament ended its session on Friday after approving legislation to set up a human rights commission, officials said, reports Reuters.

"It is an important step to redress cases of human rights violation and raise general awareness on human rights," said Mahesh Acharya, a deputy in the ruling Centre-Right Coalition who moved the legislation.

Parliament officials said both houses of parliament passed the rights bill and then King Birendra formally closed the session on schedule.

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, who heads a three-party Centre-Right Coalition government, ran into criticism from the communist opposition for failing to combat corruption.

## Plot to blow up FBI complex: 5 arrested

WASHINGTON, Oct 12: The FBI has arrested five members of a West Virginia militia group on charges they plotted to blow up a FBI's national fingerprint records complex in the state, law enforcement sources said Friday, reports AP.

The five members of the West Virginia Mountaineer Militia were in FBI custody in Clarksburg. The bureau planned an afternoon news conference at a nearby field office, said the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

In Huntington, West Virginia, a local television report said Edward Moore was charged in federal court with conspiracy to manufacture explosive materials. FBI agents refused to say whether Moore had a connection with the alleged plot.

## BRIEFLY

### Dissident charged with conspiring against Beijing

China has charged student dissident Wang Dan with conspiring to subvert the government and setting up a network to help other dissidents, a human rights group said, AFP reports from Beijing.

The Beijing No. 1 Intermediate Court handed Wang Dan's indictment to his family on Friday, the New York-based Human Rights in China said in a faxed statement. Signed by the Beijing procuratorate, it charges Wang Dan—who has already been detained without charge for 17 months with four offences the most serious being 'conspiracy to subvert the government' by criticising the Chinese government in articles published in newspapers and magazines.

### Wife of Japanese PM criticises Washington Post

The wife of Japan's Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto criticised the Washington Post Friday, saying she objected to an article published after she was interviewed by the newspaper earlier this week, AFP reports from Kurashiki.

Speaking on the campaign trail in her husband's home prefecture of Okayama in western Japan, Kumiko Hashimoto accused the newspaper of falsely portraying her husband's motivation for running in the local electoral district alone.

### 10 feared dead in Estonia road mishap

At least 10 schoolchildren were feared dead Friday after a bus carrying the children home from a sports competition collided with a truck in eastern Estonia, officials said, AP reports from Tallinn.

The bus was hit in the side by a timber-loaded Kamaz truck driving at high speed on country road near the town of Jõgeva, a local government head Raito Vagi told the Baltic News Service (BNS). The bus driver and at least 10 children aged 10 to 16 were feared dead in the accident, according to Vagi.

### Blast kills 6 in Algeria

A home-made bomb planted by suspected Islamic militants exploded Friday at a busy marketplace in the Algerian coastal town of Kolea killing six people, including three children and wounding 72, the security services said, AFP reports from Algiers.

Seven of those hurt in the attack in the town 30 kilometres (18 miles) from Algiers were said to be in a serious condition, security services said. But doctors said about a dozen casualties were on the critical list and had to have limbs amputated, several children were also among the wounded.

### Brazilian singer Russo dies

Singer Renato Russo, who helped turn the rock band Legião Urbana into one of Brazil's most popular groups, died Friday of a lung infection, his record company said. He was 36, AP reports from Rio de Janeiro.

EMI-Odeon issued a statement praising Russo's "boundless talent and the beauty of his works and interpretations, which we had the privilege of recording for eternity." With 4.5 million records sold, Legião Urbana—Urban Legion—was the most successful of a generation of local bands that sprouted in the high-plains capital of Brasilia in the 1980s.

## US denies any rift with ROK UN council to condemn DPRK's sub incursion

SEOUL, South Korea, Oct 12: The UN Security Council has unanimously agreed on a resolution to condemn North Korea for a recent submarine infiltration of rival South Korea, Washington's top Asia diplomat said Saturday, reports AP.

"We call upon North Korea to change its course and change its attitude," Assistant Secretary of State Winston Lord told a news conference, wrapping up his three-day visit here on the ramifications of the intrusion.

The discovery of the communist sub on the South's east coast triggered shock and strengthened fears that despite its worsening economic difficulties, the North was still seeking dangerous military confrontation on the divided Korean Peninsula.

South Korean troops launched a massive manhunt for 26 North Korean agents believed to have come ashore from the sub found stranded September 18. So far, 22 have been killed or found dead.

South Korea believes the submarine was on a spy mission, while the North says it ran aground by accident after developing engine trouble and that its crew was forced to come ashore.

The North vowed 'thousand-fold' retaliation for the killings. Washington and South Korea call it a serious violation of the armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War.

"We have just successfully reached agreement in New York with all the countries on the Security Council on a presidential statement which expressed serious concern over the North Korean actions," Lord said.

Reuter adds: Washington's top Asia official today denied any rift with South Korea over how to respond to a North Korean submarine incursion, and he warned Pyongyang to 'change its attitude' towards Seoul.

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## France calls for an end to Afghan fighting Taliban deny rounding up men to boost war-effort

KABUL, Oct 12: The Taliban militia today reacted furiously to reports it was rounding up men to boost their war-effort against the ex-Afghan government, threatening to 'punish' those who spread the story, reports AFP.

Kabul's police command warned in a statement broadcast on Taliban-controlled Radio Kabul that "those who manufacture frightening rumours" would face an unspecified punishment.

The Taliban's acting Minister for Information and Culture Amir Khan Muttaqi also flatly denied the reports that men were being rounded up in mosques markets and even in their homes in Kabul and surrounding areas to fight the ousted regime.

Rumours that the Taliban are rounding up local people and the remnants of the previous regime and making them fight for us or even making them walk across minefields to clear them is an outright lie," he said.

The people are voluntarily defending the Islamic state of Afghanistan and have promised to be at its service, we have never compelled local people to join us, he added.

Muttaqi said residents of Kabul and its surrounding provinces were fed up with the now toppled government of ex-President Burhanuddin Rabbani and that they were voluntarily joining the Taliban militias.

Locals have told AFP that friends had been dragged from mosques and bazaars in the city by Taliban fighters and pressed into service north of the capital where the militia is battling to fend off commando-style attacks launched by the ex-government's top commander, Ahmad Shah Massoud.

In addition, they claim that some men, often Panjshiris, members of the former ruling elite here are being taken from their homes at night before being shipped to conflict spots.

Some so far unsubstantiated rumours tell of men being used to detonate mines laid by Massoud's followers to allow the Taliban to advance over the area towards their enemies without suffering casualties themselves.

Another reports from Qala Murad Beg says, fighting between the Taliban religious militia and supporters of the ousted Afghan government forced the closure of a highway 20 kilometres (12 miles) north of Kabul, witnesses said today.

Reuter adds: France called on Friday for an end to civil strife in Afghanistan and the creation of a coalition government in Kabul.

"France renews its call for a ceasefire and a dialogue in light of the need for national reconciliation and the creation of a government representative of all parties," Foreign Ministry spokesman Jacques Rummelhardt told reporters.

Washington, Oct 12: The UN Security Council on Friday threatened to impose trade and travel sanctions against UNITA from next month in a bid to step up pressure on the former Angolan rebels to comply with peace accords, reports AFP.

In a resolution adopted unanimously, the 15-member Council said it was ready to consider imposing trade sanctions and travel restrictions against the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola unless the UN chief reported by November 20 that UNITA was complying.

The Council called for 'substantial and genuine progress' by UNITA on 12 specific military and political steps.

UNITA is blamed for the delays in implementing the 1994 Lusaka peace accords, providing for a joint military and national unity government which put an end to two decades of civil war in Angola.

The Council said that the continuing delays on key military and political issues "are no longer acceptable."

It called on UNITA notably to complete the military integration programme, to allow the extension of government control throughout the country, and to return its deputies to Parliament.

AP adds: The Security Council agreed unanimously Friday to continue the UN peacekeeping operation in Angola but threatened to consider sanctions against rebels if they keep stalling on commitments to end the 18-year civil war.

The mandate for the 7,000-member mission, the UN's largest peacekeeping operation, was extended until December 11.

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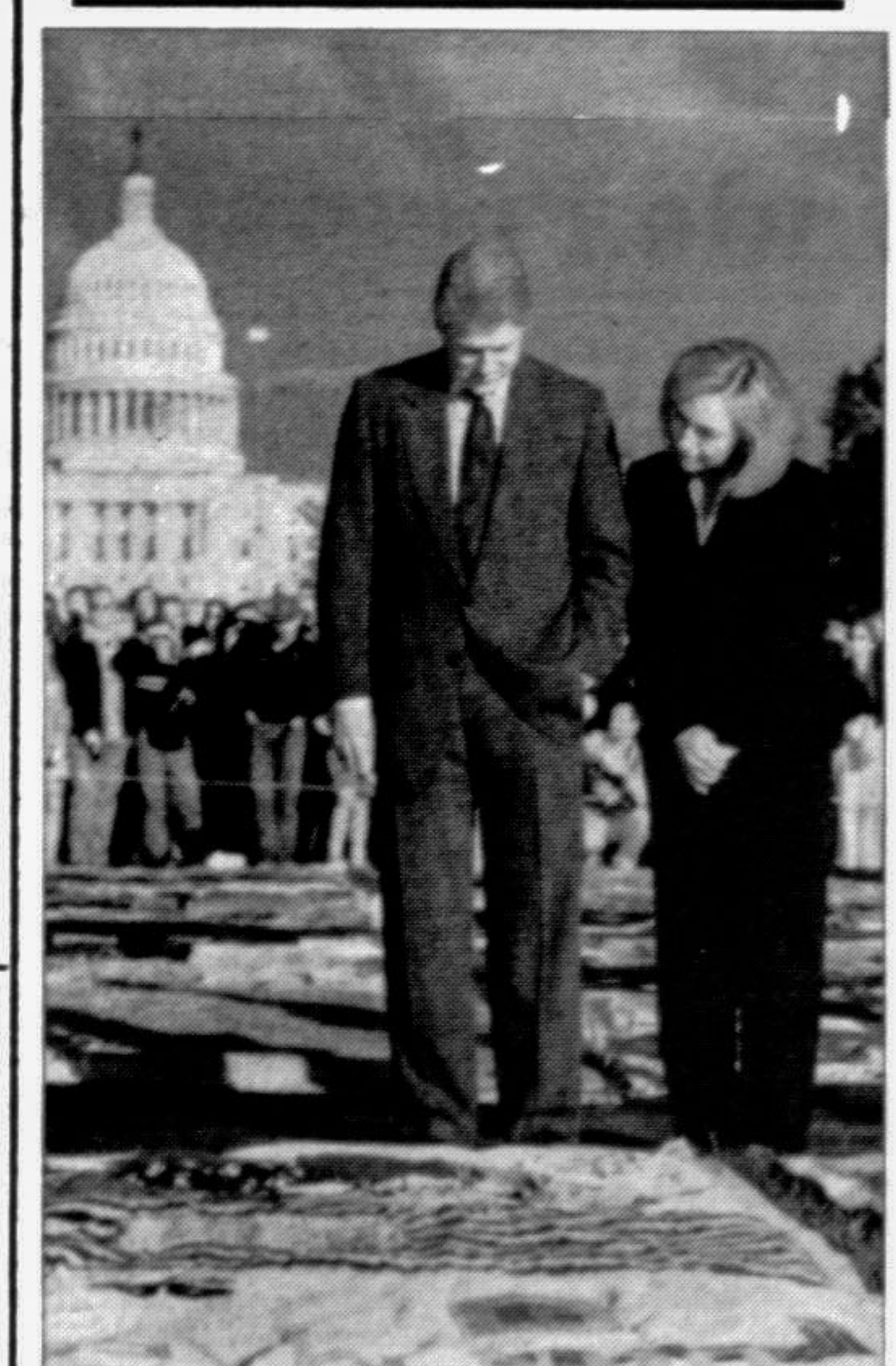
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## Off the Record



US President Bill Clinton and First Lady Hillary visit the AIDS Quilt on the Mall in Washington DC, Friday. The AIDS Memorial Quilt is made out of 40,000 panels, covering the equivalent of 24 football fields, to memorialise AIDS victims. — AFP/UNB photo

## Bid to focus attention on AIDS epidemic

WASHINGTON: When it was first displayed in the nation's capital in 1987, the AIDS quilt was about a city block long, reports AP.

With eight more years of deaths from the epidemic, the colourful patchwork of cloth pieces remembering individual victims now stretches nearly a mile (kilometre) from the Washington Monument to the foot of the Capitol.

Even so, the full quilt — on display this weekend for the first time in four years — commemorates only about 11 per cent of Americans who have died from AIDS.

"I have several friends who will be laid out in the panels," said Joe Wassam, a Takoma Park, Maryland, volunteer helping put the quilt down on the grassy mall. "This is a way of being back with them."

The quilt, bearing the names of more than 70,000 people on 38,000 panels, is the centerpiece of dozens of weekend events sponsored by several groups, designed to again focus attention on the epidemic.

Friendly crowds greeted President Clinton and his wife, Hillary Rodham Clinton when they strolled, sometimes hand in hand, through sections of the sun-dappled quilt late Friday afternoon.

"This means a lot to us," someone shouted. "We love you," cried another.

Another volunteer thanked Clinton for being the first president to visit the quilt. When it was here in the late 1980s and early 1990s, either President Reagan or President Bush were in office.

Signs of life in 2nd Mars' meteorite

NEW YORK: A NASA scientist has discovered what may be signs of life in a second meteorite from Mars, CBS News reported, says AP.

Johnson Space Centre researcher David S. McKay told 'The CBS Evening News' on Friday that he spotted "possible cell structures, in at least one other meteorite."

McKay, other NASA scientists and university researchers first reported in August that chemical microscopic and organic tests of tiny golden-colored bits of a meteorite suggest there must have been microscopic and organic tests of tiny golden-colored bits of a meteorite suggest there must have been microscopic life on Mars some 3.6 billion years ago.

The newest sign of life was found in a rock billions of years younger than the first, McKay said, noting that "Most of the lifetime of Mars is in this range between the two meteorites."

Scientists said the meteorite used to make the initial discovery is thought to have formed on Mars 4.5 billion years ago, a time when the solar system was forming. It was blasted out of the planet by some massive collision 16 million years ago and then landed in an Antarctic ice field 13,000 years ago.

Thin slices of the rock, say the researchers, revealed organic molecules called polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons.

But after the August revelation, other scientists said the initial reports of signs of life in the meteorites demanded additional study.

Child with two brains!

BEIJING: A child with two brains is living in the northern Chinese province of Liaoning, according to a report received Saturday in Beijing, reports AFP.

The child, identified only by his surname, Yu, was born in Chaoyang city in July 1995 and appeared normal except that he needed no sleep, the October 10 edition of the official Xinmin Evening news said.

After a year of the boy sleeping of a maximum of one hour a night, his weary parents took him to hospital for a check up.

Baffled doctors found normal result for all standard tests