

## International

# Rabbani in Tehran for talks with Iranian officials

## 50,000 Afghans flee homes to escape fighting in north

ISLAMABAD, Nov 11: Fierce fighting between the radical Islamic Taliban militia and its opponents has forced 40,000 to 50,000 Afghans to flee their homes in northwestern Afghanistan, the UN refugee agency said today, reports Reuters.

"Around 45,000 people from small towns and villages in front-line areas in Badghis province have fled southwards to the town of Qala-i-Nau," the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said in a statement. "Another 2,000 to 3,000 people have already proceeded further south to Herat."

"More people are arriving in Herat every day, some after walking for several days and nights," the statement said. "A camp set up in Herat last Wednesday is already full."

The UNHCR said it had agreed with the Taliban, who

have controlled the western city of Herat since September 1995, to let the newly-displaced people use another camp, normally used by Afghan refugees returning from neighbouring Iran.

The statement said many of the displaced people were nomadic Koochis. It quoted those arriving in Herat as speaking of heavy shelling and aerial bombardments and said many had left their homes in such haste that they could not bring any belongings.

The Taliban have been locked in see-saw battles in Badghis with the combined forces of northern Uzbek General Abdul Rashid Dostum and ousted government commander Ahmad Shah Massoud.

Meanwhile, ousted Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani arrived in Iran today for a one-day visit, the official Iranian news agency IRNA re-

ported. It said Rabbani, who is supported by Iran, will hold talks with senior officials including first Vice-President Hassan Habibi and Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati.

Rabbani, who is friendly to and still recognises the Taliban government, which was toppled by the Taliban Islamic militia in September.

Rabbani, who has allied himself with several other Afghan factions to retake lost territory, held talks on Sunday with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Alaeddin Borujerdi in northern Afghanistan.

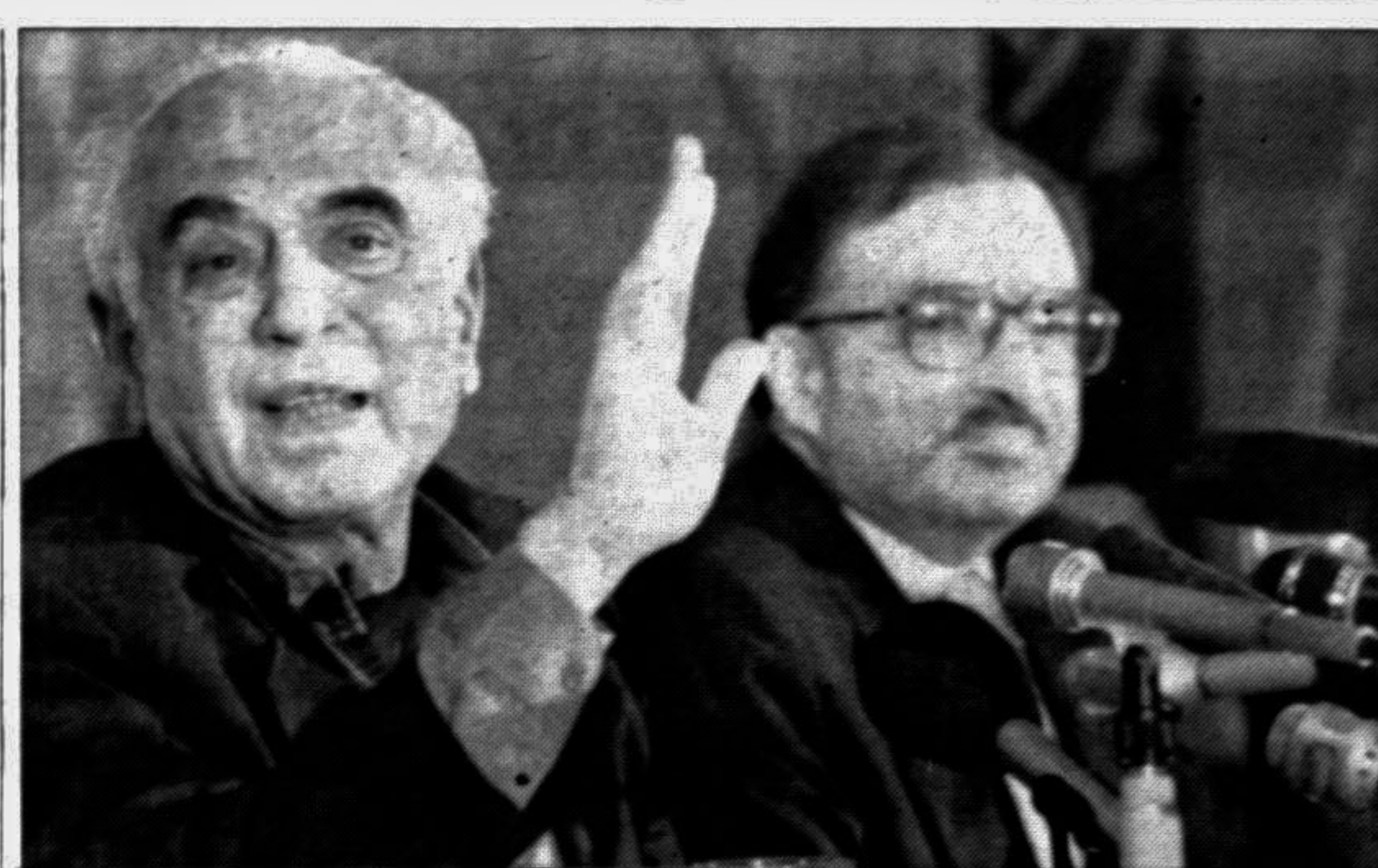
The former president thanked neighbouring Iran for its efforts to restore peace in the war-torn country, according to Iran's official news agency IRNA.

Borujerdi for his part stressed his country's wish to ensure Afghanistan's "territorial integrity" and for a broad-based future Afghan government.

AFP adds: A total of 29 Taliban Muslim militia corpses have now been transferred to Kabul from the battlefields north of the capital. A Red Cross spokesman said Sunday.

Fifteen more bodies were brought to Kabul today from the Charikar area, said Joerg Stoeklin, press officer for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

This first transfer is a result of negotiations held, at the ICRC initiative, between belligerent parties.



Pakistan's caretaker Prime Minister Meraj Khalid (L) addresses his first press conference after the dissolution of National Assembly by the President Farooq Leghari, in Islamabad Sunday. Khalid assured that the accountability operation would not in any way upset the February 3 date for the new general elections set by the President Leghari after he dissolved the Benazir government. Shahid Burki, adviser to Prime Minister for finance is on right.

— AFP/UNB photo

## UN aid mission likely to begin today

### Ghali for world intervention to save refugees in Zaire

PARIS, Nov 11: UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali made a new appeal on Sunday for immediate world intervention to save starving refugees in Zaire, saying thousands were dying with every hour that passed, reports Reuters.

"I make a new appeal to the members of the United Nations, to men and women of good will, to non-governmental organisations, to intervene today," Boutros-Ghali said during a stopover in Paris on his way to the World Food Summit in Rome.

The international community must act immediately and every hour that passes leads to thousands of dead, he said of the disaster facing 1.2 million Hutu refugees with scant food or

water after a Tutsi rebellion in eastern Zaire.

On Saturday the UN Security Council called on UN members to lay the ground work for a multinational force to help end the crisis in eastern Zaire but postponed a resolution setting up a force.

Boutros-Ghali, at Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport, said this week's World Food Summit takes on a special meaning when thousands of Africans are dying in the region of Kivu, in eastern Zaire.

France, which has led calls for a multinational force of between 4,000 and 5,000 troops to open relief lines to refugees in Zaire, linked any French participation to an agreement by a reluctant Washington to take part.

An American presence in this operation seems absolutely essential, foreign minister Hervé de Charette told France Info Radio. We will only do it with the participation of Europe, or Africa and of the United States.

AP adds: An operation to deliver badly needed food and medicine to eastern Zaire where hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees and Zairians have been displaced by war, could begin Tuesday, a UN official said Sunday.

Omar Bakhet, the senior UN official in Rwanda, said preparations for the mission began when rebel leader Laurent Kabila gave permission Saturday during a meeting with UN officials in no-man's land between Rwanda and Zaire.



Palestinians carry the body of Atallah Amireh, 36, in the West Bank village of Naalene Sunday. Amireh, 36, was killed when Israeli troops opened fire on a protest against the seizure of land to expand a Jewish settlement near the West Bank town of Ramallah. Thirteen other Palestinian demonstrators were shot, but their injuries were not life-threatening.

— AFP/UNB photo

## 4 Danish journalists arrested

### Navy destroys 5 LTTE boats

COLOMBO, Nov 11: Sri Lankan gunboats beat off a Tamil rebel assault on the navy's northern headquarters early Monday, destroying five attacking boats and killing at least 18 guerrillas, military officials said, reports AP.

The attack came ahead of the "Heroes' Week," the guerrillas' annual remembrance from November 17-23 of comrades killed in the 13-year civil war. The rebels normally mount a big attack before or during the week.

Naval gunboats detected nine guerrilla boats armed with machine guns near Karainagar base, which is on an island off the Jaffna Peninsula, at 1 am local time Monday (1900 GMT Sunday) and opened fire, said Commodore Mohan Wijewickrema, the director of naval operations, in Colombo.

The leading rebel boat, which was packed with explo-

sives to blow up inside the base, was destroyed first, exploding about eight kilometres (five miles) from the harbour, said Wijewickrema, in a telephone interview.

A hallmark of the Tamil Tigers is to use suicide bombers who crash boats or vehicles packed with explosives into targets. The latest such attack was two weeks ago, when a rebel suicide boat sank a gunboat guarding the eastern naval headquarters killing 12 sailors.

Three other boats were also sunk in Sunday's incident. The other guerrilla boats then fled, but gunboats gave chase and sank a fifth. The remaining four boats, escaped.

One naval boat was slightly damaged in the two-hour battle, with a single sailor wounded. At dawn, gunboats began hunting for rebel survivors but have so far found none. Rebel boats usually carry four crew-

men or women, while suicide boats have two.

Naval officials believe the rebels were on their way to attack the Jaffna Peninsula's main port of Kankesanthurai, 15 kilometres (10 miles) away, and attacked the Karainagar base first to prevent warships from intervening.

Kankesanthurai is the only link for food supplies to reach the isolated Peninsula's half a million people from other government areas. The Peninsula is 300 kilometres (185 miles) north of the capital, Colombo.

Meanwhile, police detectives arrested four Danish journalists who had come to the country to report on a Sri Lankan teenager who was deported from Denmark last week, officials said Sunday.

The journalists were arrested Saturday and had been given a seven-day detention order.

## Choi asked to testify

### Ex-ROK minister indicted for taking bribes

SEOUL, Nov 11: South Korean prosecutors indicted former defence minister Lee Yang-Ho today on charges of taking bribes over an arms procurement project, reports AFP.

Lee, jailed on October 26 after being sacked from his post, was accused of accepting 180,000 dollars last year from an arms dealer acting on behalf of the giant Daewoo conglomerate.

AP adds: A former president was also ordered Monday to testify in the appeal trial of his two successors, who were convicted of mutiny and treason.

Choi Kyu-hah must appear in the next trial session, scheduled for next Monday, escorted by law enforcement officials.

## Rafsanjani calls for security forum in Indian Ocean

TEHRAN, Nov 11: Iran's President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani on Sunday called for a regional organisation to promote security and cooperation in the Indian Ocean, saying Iran could play an important role, reports Reuters.

"The strategic importance and broadness of the Indian Ocean region necessitates the regional state join hands to preserve security and boost co-operation by setting up a powerful forum," Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said to open an international conference on the Indian Ocean security.

Rafsanjani quoted by official radio, said Iran was a "strong link in the chain of Indian Ocean littoral states." Iran is a reliable anchor for the ship of peace in the region," he added.

## Megawati testifies before court

JAKARTA, Nov 11: Indonesian opposition leader Megawati Sukarnoputri today testified before a packed court trying 124 of her supporters charged in connection with a July riot, reports AFP.

Megawati, the ousted leader of the Indonesian Democracy Party (PDI) said a senior government official had warned her two days prior to the riot about the takeover of her party's headquarters, which sparked the violence.

"For the safety of the official, and out of respect of the person I will not mention the official's name," Megawati said.

## Castro greeted warmly in Chile

SANTIAGO, Nov 11: Thousands of leftist supporters of Cuban President Fidel Castro converged at an isolated square in downtown Santiago Sunday to support the Cuban leader, while his Latin American counterparts blasted Cuba's political system, reports AFP.

Waving the blue, white and red flags of Chile and Cuba as well as red banners of the Communist Party emblazoned with the hammer and sickle, an estimated 10,000 people — 5,000 according to police — cheered Castro and Cuba and remembered Chile's late socialist president Salvador Allende.

## Govt appeals for int'l aid

### 'Andhra cyclone death toll may climb up to 2,500'

HYDERABAD, India, Nov 11: A cyclone which devastated India's eastern coast last week could have claimed up to 2,500 lives, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh said today, reports AFP.

"We have reports so far that 710 people have died in the cyclone and 900 people are missing," Chandrababu Naidu said. "I do not think the toll will go beyond 2,500."

"We have appealed for international aid and have asked all the foreign and private companies to come forward and help our people to be back on their feet," he said.

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Naidu, who had earlier estimated that 1,500 had died, said most of those unaccounted for were fishermen who ignored cyclone warnings before venturing out to sea.

"The missing fishermen are my biggest fear," Naidu said. "They disregarded our warnings. If they had listened to us, we could have minimised loss of lives."

Naidu said relief workers would be able to reach every affected village by late today or Tuesday, adding the total damage was estimated at 1.5 billion dollars.

AP adds: Relief crew rushed in food, water and medicine on Monday to an estimated 500,000 people who have been stranded by this week's killer cyclone.

## US senator urges junta to hold talks with Suu Kyi

YANGON, Nov 11: A US Senator said today during a visit to Yangon he had urged Myanmar's military government to hold talks with Nobel Peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and set a deadline for the writing of a new constitution, reports Reuters.

John McCain, a Republican Senator from Arizona, said he met Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt, head of military intelligence and secretary of the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), during a one-day visit to the country.

"In our meetings we expressed the American people's belief that dialogue between Myanmar authorities, Aung San Suu Kyi, and the NLD (National League for Democracy), was indispensable to progress toward national reconciliation, and should begin now," McCain said in a statement upon leaving Yangon.

He did not say what the response was from the government.

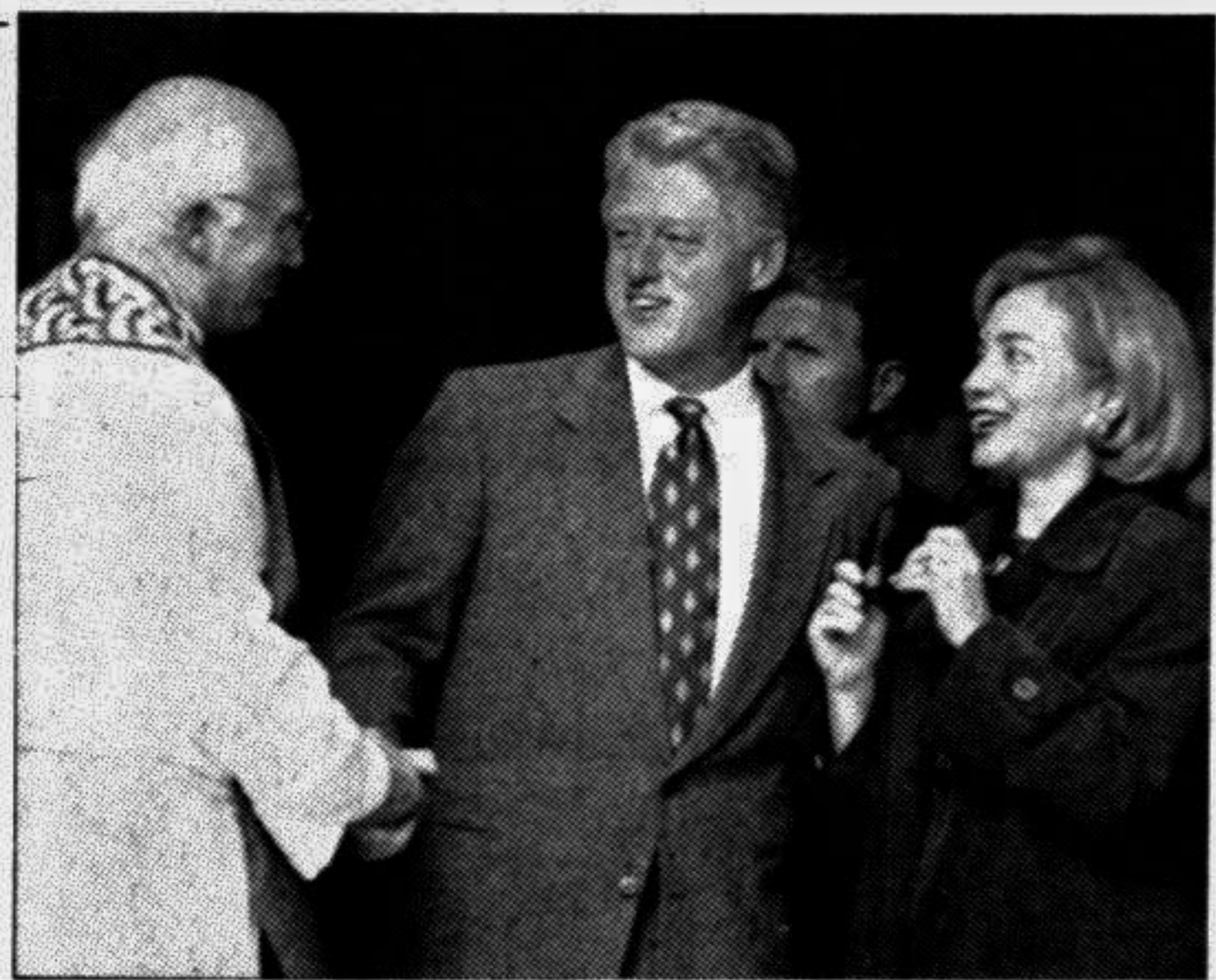
McCain's statement repeated comments made earlier by US Charge d'Affairs Kent Wiedemann, and said the United States was deeply concerned about a weekend attack on Suu Kyi and had asked for government assurance that the incident would not be repeated.

McCain said he also urged the government to set a timetable to complete drafting a new constitution, and to hold a "free and fair" national referendum.

A national convention of hand-picked delegates has been meeting intermittently since 1993 at the whim of the SLORC, to draft guidelines for the constitution.

The government has said the convention will reconvene this year, but did not give a date for when the charter would be finished.

Suu Kyi angered the SLORC last year when she pulled the NLD out of the convention, saying the process was not democratic and did not represent the will of the people.



US President Bill Clinton (C) shakes the hand of Dr J Phillip Wogaman (L) after attending services at the Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, DC Sunday. President Clinton was accompanied by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton (R). Dr Wogaman is the senior minister at the church.

— AFP/UNB photo

## Off the Record

### Like daughter like mother

LONDON: Princess Diana's ex-stepmother Raine was quoted in news reports Monday as saying that she and her third husband, French Count Jean-Francois Tineton de Chambrun, have divorced, reports AP.

The London newspaper The Express quoted the 67-year-old former Countess Spencer as saying Sunday night: "I have great affection for my former husband (the French count). I wish him every happiness." She said the split was very amicable, it reported.

The Express and the Times of London said the divorce was granted by a court in Grasse, southern France, but they didn't say when.

But two other papers, The Sun and The Daily Mail, said the court granted the divorce nearly two years ago in January 1995.

The Sun said Diana was one of the few people who knew about it. The Sun quoted an unidentified friend of the former countess as denying that the break-up had been kept secret. But it said the friend added: "They didn't publicise it either."

The Daily Mail reported: "Raine kept her divorce secret. She just didn't want to look foolish."

Raine and the 61-year-old count married in London in July 1993, 18 months after the death from a heart attack of her second husband, the 8th Earl Spencer, Diana's father, in March 1992 at age 68.

### Patron of boy prostitution

CANBERRA: Former Australian ambassador John Holloway used his money to encourage young Cambodian boys to become prostitutes, a Cambodian teen-ager testified Monday, reports AP.

Holloway, the 53-year-old former Australian ambassador to Cambodia, is facing a charge under the Child Sex Tourism Act for allegedly having sex with a child under 16 in the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh, in 1994.

Early in the 1990s, working with then-Foreign Minister Gareth Evans, Holloway helped devise the UN peace accord that led to the departure of the occupying Vietnamese army, and elections in 1993 to replace the Hanoi-backed regime with a new coalition government.

More recently, Holloway has been an advisor to the Cambodian government.

Earlier in the committal hearing, a Cambodian boy gave more than two days of evidence through an interpreter, via closed-circuit television that he had oral and anal sex with Holloway.

On Monday, the Magistrates Court heard evidence from a 16-year-old Cambodian boy who also said he had anal and oral sex with Holloway in late 1994 at a hotel room.

Through an interpreter the boy, an orphan, said he was homeless at the time and later moved to an organisation for homeless children run by World Vision.

The boy said he wanted to become one of Holloway's adopted children.

## Israeli PM fails to achieve breakthrough in talks

JERUSALEM, Nov 11: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu failed in a phone call to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to achieve a breakthrough in talks stuck on a Hebron troop redeployment, a Palestinian negotiator said on Monday, reports Reuters.

"Netanyahu called Arafat last night and he reiterated his commitment to implementing the deals, but as far as we are concerned this is only a verbal commitment," Palestinian peace negotiator Hassan Asfour said.

"It is not translated in the talks and they do not give it to us on paper," Asfour told Reuters.

Israeli concern for the security of Jews in the West Bank holy city has held up its handover to Palestinian self-rule.

Some 400 Jews live and study there amidst 100,000 Arabs.

Palestinian officials had hoped to clinch a deal on the long-delayed Israeli troop pull-back during a Middle East economic conference starting on Tuesday in Cairo. Chief negotiators Saeb Erekat and Dan Shomron met on Sunday night.

But today PLO officials said they did not expect a breakthrough at the two-day conference. They said the Israelis were offering only the same proposals as in the past.

"Nothing has changed," one PLO official said.

Israeli radio said today that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hoped for a deal before he leaves on Wednesday for a planned week-long visit to the United States.

## China emphasises on 'spiritual civilisation' to make better citizens

BEIJING, Nov 11: Slogans such as don't spit, be a good citizen and love your district, love your country have sprung up on meticulously-cleaned Beijing streets which have new glistening dustbins every few hundred metres, reports IPS.

The new dustbins could be symbolic of where old history will go. At the just ended plenum of China's Communist Party, emphasis was given to China's "spiritual civilisation" in order to make better citizens and promote Confucian traditions of hard work and frugality.

"Great development of various undertakings" have taken place in the country since China introduced its 'open door' policy, said a document endorsed at the closed-door Congress. It added that "quite a few problems, some of them serious" need to be addressed in

the social spheres of society.

Words have been matched with the deeds of role-models. Selfless plumbers, uncorrupted tax collectors, devoted party cadre, model soldiers have been held a loft as shining examples of the new China.

Last month, China's central television started a series featuring model ticket conductor Li Suli on bus line 21 in Beijing. She is promoted as an exemplary worker just for doing her job with a smile and answering passenger queries politely.

"These days people are just not given the theory of how to build a spiritual civilisation, people are encouraged to follow concrete examples by deeds," says Luop Guojie, head of the Ethics Science Institute at People's University in Beijing and member of China's Morality Academy.

This frenzy of new civilisation-building aims to reinforce

the country's traditional Confucian ethic of respect for authority, and uphold virtues of honesty, diligence and selflessness.

The Chinese leadership sees this new moral crusade as an antidote to rampant corruption, crime and money-worship that has swept China in the wake of economic liberalisation where the creed has been 'getting rich is glorious.'

It is a revival of the strategy of the 1980's when the architect of China's reforms, Deng Xiaoping invoked 'Spiritual pollution' to combat a resurgence of capitalist evils unleashed by an open-door policy that he himself initiated.

"The market-economy is about the individual interest and thus it can lead to excesses, like money-worship and hedonism," says Luop from the Moral Academy, a think-tank established in 1980 by scholars

from various Chinese universities.

Unlike previous campaigns which focused on upholding moral standards of cadre and the army, this one is designed to become China's new creed for the next century. Jiang has called on everyone to help him spread this new spiritual civilisation and hope it will become his distinct political legacy.

The activity called upon citizens' high moral and social consciousness and 20,000 yellow and bright-red umbrellas with inscriptions reading civilisation umbrella, let's use it together were handed out. At the end of the rainy season, only half the umbrellas were returned.

China's south-eastern Fujian province has been trying to spread 'spiritual civilisation' to the grassroots, and announced it will draw up and implement a 'civilised citizen

pledge' to be signed by every single person in the region.

Those who throw garbage carelessly, park cars illegally or squeeze into public transport impolitely will be punished. Also targeted: group gambling, superstitious activities, luxurious weddings and extravagant funerals.

The drive to make better citizens has reached even China's five affluent special economic zones which have long been criticised for failing to combat crime and corruption in their relentless pursuit of prosperity. Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Xiamen, Shantou and Hainan pledged in August to upgrade their moral standards.

The morality crusade is the latest tool in an official struggle to reassert control at a time of runaway economic growth and a wrenching shift from centrally planned economy to

'market-Leninism.'

Deng was the architect of economic reforms that created this ideological vacuum. And as the patriarch lies on his deathbed, his prospective successors are trying to fill that vacuum with a new spiritual civilisation.

Beijing's municipal authorities have a new target: To ensure that one-third of all residential areas in the next five years reach the standard of 'civilised areas: They should be safe, quiet, ordered, convenient and have a beautiful environment.

Some observers say the campaign in more of a political move. They say Jiang is very much aware of the concerns among hardliners within the party about western influence on Chinese society, and will want a assured of their support ahead of a potential leadership tussle once Deng passes away.