

Indian aviation experts say

Language problem might have caused mid-air collision

NEW DELHI, Nov 13: Indian experts said Tuesday's mid-air disaster which killed around 350 people could have been caused by a language problem. "It is quite likely the Kazakh plane whose pilots may have had problems understanding English commands by ground controllers, relocated wrongly Unni Kartha, one of India's top aviation experts told AFP.

We will know the exact circumstances of the collision when we retrieve the cockpit voice recorders and the flight digital data recorders of the two planes Kartha said. India civil aviation authorities said the two planes turned into a fireball after the collision at 18:40 pm (1310 GMT) some 40 nautical miles (74 kilometres) west of the Indian capital.

Director General of Civil Aviation H S Khola said 351 people had died and added: "There is no information about any survivors." The radar blips of both the aircraft disappeared at 18:40 hours. The air traffic controllers guild of India, meanwhile said the collision may have been caused by Russian built aircraft nor-

both the Saudi and the Kazakh aircraft, he added. Another report says: An Indian aviation expert yesterday said the mid-air collision between two jets which killed around 350 people was probably caused by human error. "Otherwise how else this could be possible?" said Subroto Sen, a former engineering chief of state-run Indian airlines, adding air traffic controllers appeared to have mixed up the flight paths of the two jets. "One was climbing and the other plane was descending and despite the fact they had their air corridors they converged and crashed," said Sen. L. Ojha, a former air traffic controller, said however that a "time-lag" between data received by radar units and the air traffic control tower could have been fatal.

BRIEFLY

Khmers kill five troops

Still attacking despite defections that have thinned their ranks, Khmer Rouge guerrillas have killed five government soldiers and injured seven in northwestern Cambodia, a government spokesman said Wednesday. AP reports from Phnom Penh.

Six hanged in Iran

Six Iranians convicted of murder and armed robbery have been hanged in a Tehran prison, the newspaper Keyhan reported Tuesday. AFP says from Tehran.

Mohammed-Reza Gholpaygani, leader of a gang of robbers and charged with murdering a worker in the Tehran area, was hanged Monday with five of his accomplices at Evin prison northwest of Tehran, the paper said. Since 1989, armed robbers have been subject to the death penalty in Iran.

Qatari Emir appoints woman in govt post

The Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, on Tuesday appointed a woman for the first time to a senior post in the government, the official QNA news agency reported. AFP says from Doha.

1 beheaded in S Arabia

Saudi Arabia beheaded a Saudi man on Tuesday for raping and killing a three-year-old boy, Saudi state television reported. Reuter says from Dubai.

Kremlin favours Russia's joining NATO

A top Kremlin security official said he favoured Russia joining NATO's political organisation and later even taking part in the military structures of the alliance. Interfax news agency said on Tuesday. Reuter reports from Moscow.

43 feared dead in Shanghai mishap

A truck loaded with building materials collided with a bus causing death or injury to 43 people in Shanghai's southeastern Qingpu district, Shanghai television reported yesterday. AFP says from Shanghai.

Ghali for urgent help in E Zaire

ROME, Nov 13: UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali made an impassioned plea today for immediate help for one million refugees in Eastern Zaire, saying they faced "certain death" if nothing is done, reports Reuter.

Accord on Euro-Weapony Bureau signed

France, Germany, Italy and Britain Tuesday signed an agreement to establish the European Weapony Bureau, Xinhua reports from Paris.

Court extends Rao's bail

NEW DELHI, Nov 13: The New Delhi High Court extended the bail Wednesday of former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao who is charged in a corruption case, reports AP.

AFP adds: The 75-year-old leader of the Congress (I) Parliamentary Party was told by a court in Delhi to return on November 21. Rao, who was ousted as prime minister in general elections earlier this year after coming to power in 1991, stands accused of being involved in the bribing of four opposition members of parliament to back his government in a confidence vote in 1993.

The hearing was held at the Vigan Bhawan Conference Centre, specially converted into a court following fears for the Congress leader's safety. The four men who allegedly accepted around one million dollars to save Rao's government, meanwhile, were remanded in custody.

GCC states urged to increase military cooperation

RIYADH, Nov 13: Gulf Arab states must increase military cooperation to guard against growing threats in the region, an official told Gulf defence ministers meeting here Tuesday, reports AFP.

India called upon the US to settle its differences with Cuba

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 13: The international community have strongly urged the United States to end its 35-year trade embargo against Cuba and repeal controversial laws punishing foreign firms investing in the Caribbean island, reports Xinhua.

India willing to discuss all bilateral issues with Pakistan

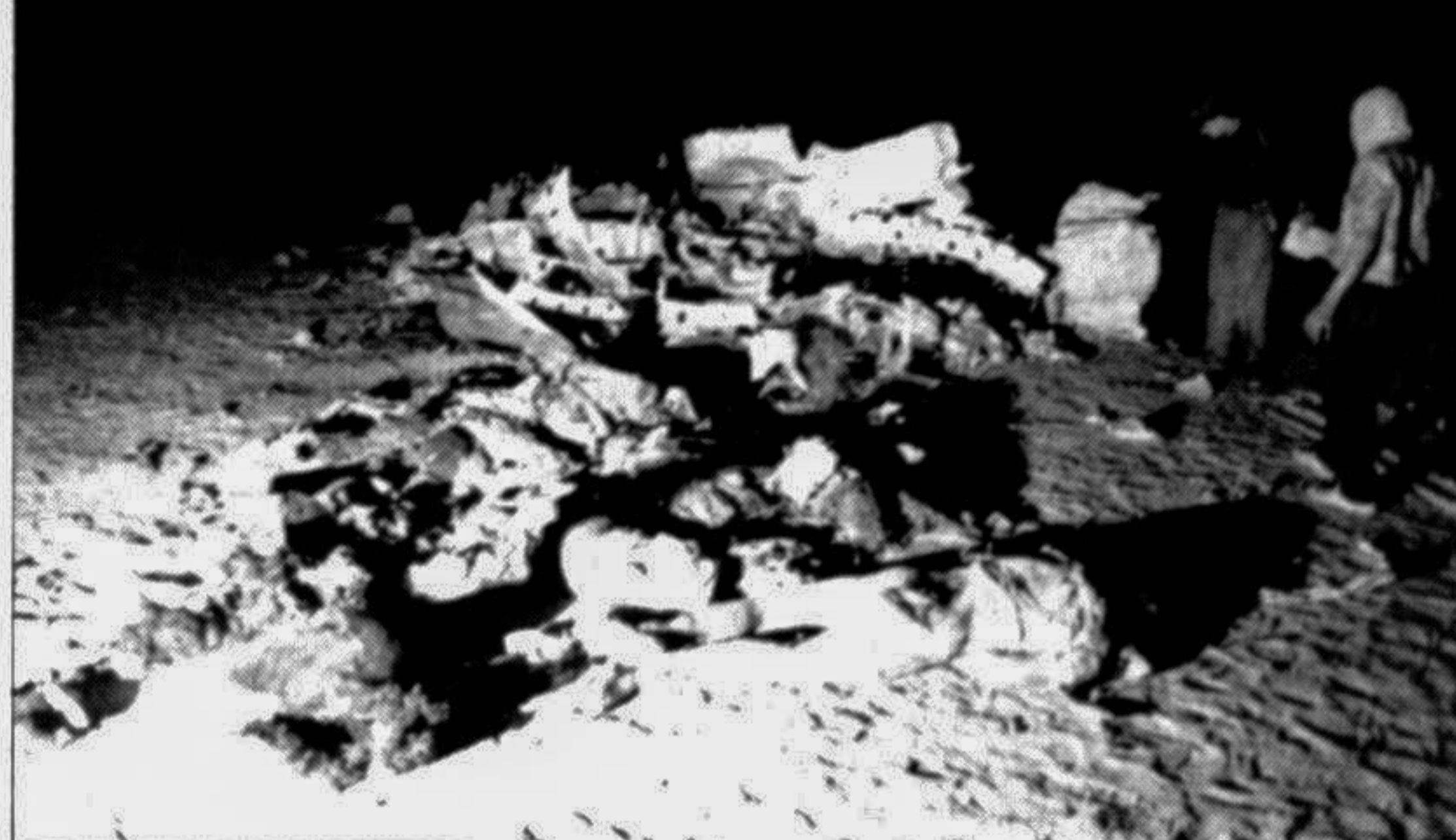
NEW DELHI, Nov 13: India said on Tuesday that it was willing to discuss all bilateral issues with Pakistan, the local press reported today, says Xinhua.

Iraq seeks timetable for UN mission

WASHINGTON, Nov 13: Iraq continues to hide weapons of mass destruction from UN inspectors, Rolf Ekeus, head of the United Nations Commission on Disarming Iraq (UNSCOM), said on Tuesday, reports AFP.

895 still missing in cyclone-hit Andhra

HYDERABAD, Nov 13: Just 315 fishermen have been found safe and 895 men are still missing after a massive cyclone which lashed the south east Indian coast last week, a spokesman at the relief control room told Reuters on Tuesday.



A policeman inspects wreckage after the deadliest mid-air collision in aviation history killed 351 people Tuesday near the Indian capital. A Saudia Airlines Boeing 747 jumbo, climbing after take off from New Delhi, slammed into a Kazakh cargo plane coming into land.

UNGA adopts resolution to end US trade embargo against Cuba

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 13: The international community have strongly urged the United States to end its 35-year trade embargo against Cuba and repeal controversial laws punishing foreign firms investing in the Caribbean island, reports Xinhua.

For the fifth year in a row, the UN General Assembly yesterday overwhelmingly adopted a resolution calling for an end to the sanctions by 137 votes to three (Israel, the US and Uzbekistan), with 25 abstentions.

Many US allies, as well as adversaries, supported the draft resolution, because they say the embargo violates their own sovereignty as it subjects them to the effects of US laws.

Criticism of the embargo has heightened since the US passed its HELMS-Burton Act earlier this year, allowing American citizens who were Cuban nationals before the 1959 revolution to sue foreign companies or individuals who are using property confiscated by the government of President Fidel Castro.



A girl walks through the rubble of a building in Nazca, Peru, 300 miles south of Lima Tuesday after an earthquake measuring 7.3 on the Richter scale struck the town. 15 people are reported dead and 120 injured.

Palestinians, Israelis to combat violence against women

BRIGHTON, England, Nov 13: Palestinian and Israeli women may disagree about politics and territorial rights. But some are working together at centres in Israel to combat a problem that cuts across ethnic and religious lines: violence against women, reports AP.

9 worst air disasters

A list of crashes from the last decade involving the Russian-made Ilyushin-76 cargo plane, reports AP.

9 worst air disasters

A list of crashes from the last decade involving the Russian-made Ilyushin-76 cargo plane, reports AP. - November 12, 1996. A Kazakhstan Airlines Il-76 cargo plane originating in Shymkent, southern Kazakhstan, crashes into a Saudi jumbo jetliner near New Delhi. The death toll was feared to be 351, making it the third-worst air crash in history.

- August 19, 1996. An Il-76 crashes while trying to make an emergency landing after takeoff from Belgrade. All 12 crew members die. - June 6, 1996. An Il-76 cargo plane crashes on takeoff at Kinshasa, Zaire, killing all eight crew members. The plane was headed to Athens, Greece.

Leghari expands cabinet

ISLAMABAD, Nov 13: Pakistani President Farooq Ahmed Leghari has expanded the interim cabinet he set up last week, officials said today, as the deposed Premier Benazir Bhutto renewed attacks on him, reports AFP.

Leghari inducted four ministers later Tuesday, raising to 16 the strength of the interim cabinet led by Malik Meraj Khattab, a veteran politician and former national assembly speaker.

The president appointed Khattab after he dismissed Bhutto on November 5, accusing her three-year old government of corruption, mismanagement and lawlessness resulting in the deaths of thousands of people.

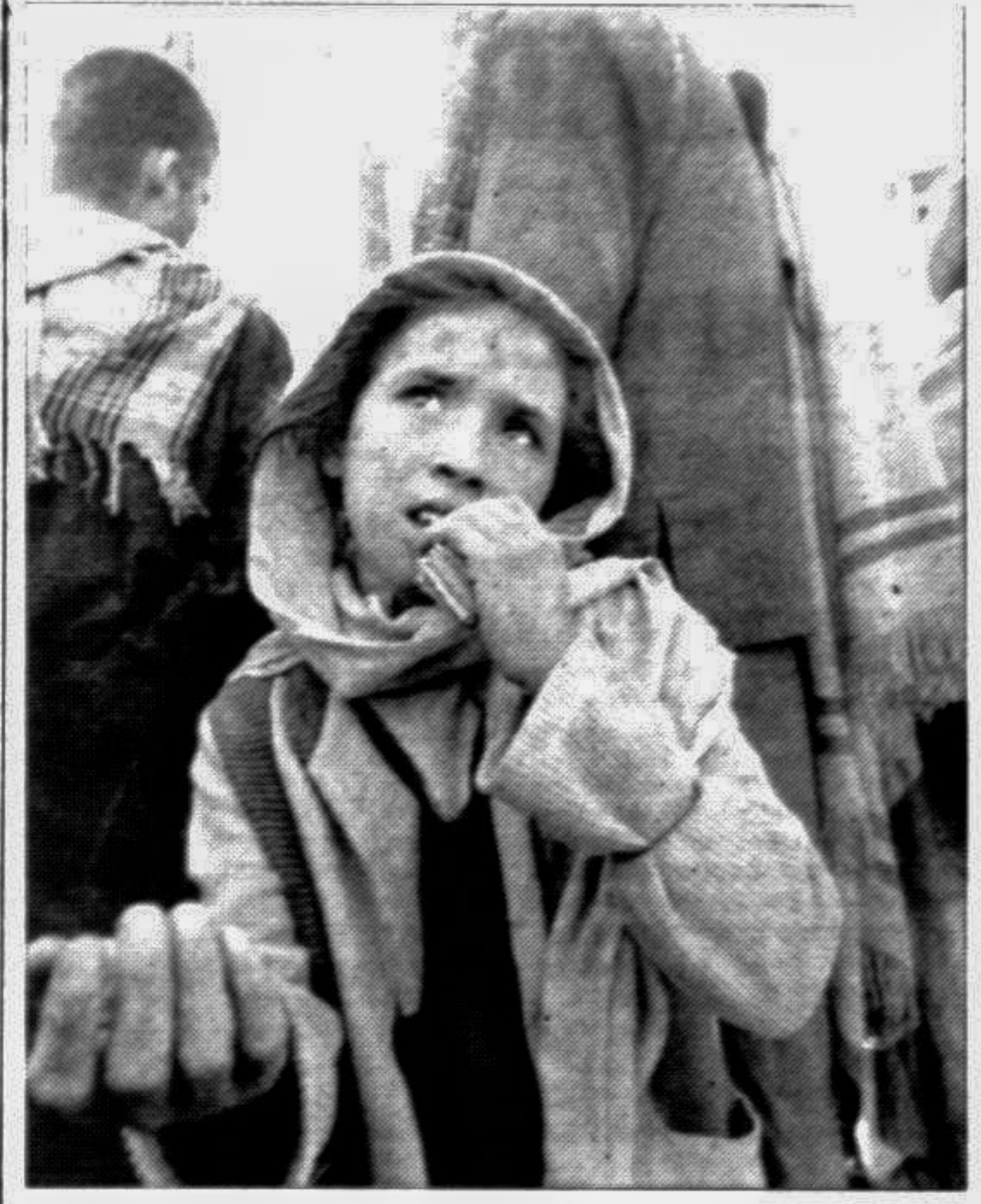
The newcomers include Abdul Ghaffar, a brother of prominent politician Ghulam Mustafa Jotwi, who was caretaker prime minister for three months in 1990 after the dismissal of Bhutto's first government.

Ghaffar was given charge of the communications ministry. Muhammad Afzal Khan, who served in Bhutto's cabinet until her ouster, is to oversee health and population welfare.

Two other additions are Subair Khan, Minadokhel (housing and works), and Amanullah Khan Gichki, whose portfolio has not yet been decided.

India willing to discuss all bilateral issues with Pakistan

NEW DELHI, Nov 13: India said on Tuesday that it was willing to discuss all bilateral issues with Pakistan, the local press reported today, says Xinhua.



A young girl begs for some change in front of a mosque in the war-torn Afghan capital Wednesday in order to collect enough money to buy some food. Factional fighting and strict Islamic laws imposed by the Taliban which deny jobs for most women, have deprived thousands of family of their incomes, leaving them to survive on help from aid agencies and street charity.

Off the Record

Gandhi asked him to keep them

LONDON: A London auction house said on Tuesday it had cancelled the sale of a collection of writings by India's revered independence leader Mahatma Gandhi after their ownership came into dispute, reports Reuter.

Gandhi's former secretary, Venkataraman Kalyanam, who kept the papers at his Madras home for nearly 50 years, had offered them for sale to raise money for a Hindu charity. But the Indian government intervened last month, saying the valuable collection should be preserved for the nation and arguing that it belonged to the trust that safeguards Gandhi memorabilia.

Smoking may raise risk of breast cancer

CHICAGO: A flawed enzyme may raise the risk of breast cancer in women who smoke, a study suggests, reports AP. Heavy smokers who had reached menopause had about four times the risk of breast cancer as nonsmokers who also had the flawed enzyme, researchers reported in Wednesday's Journal of the American Medical Association.

Iraq seeks timetable for UN mission

WASHINGTON, Nov 13: Iraq continues to hide weapons of mass destruction from UN inspectors, Rolf Ekeus, head of the United Nations Commission on Disarming Iraq (UNSCOM), said on Tuesday, reports AFP.

At a press conference organised by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies Ekeus said Iraq has not yet destroyed about 60 long-range missiles.

895 still missing in cyclone-hit Andhra

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