

# Suu Kyi calls on UN to mediate with junta



Aung San Suu Kyi production and refusing to honour their promises of multiparty democracy.

The interview was organised by the UN Association of Denmark and the World Federation of UN Associations on the eve of a vote by the UN Human Rights Committee which is expected to issue a fresh condemnation of the junta on Wednesday.

The opposition leader's appeal also came as US president Bill Clinton, speaking in Thailand, criticised Myanmar rulers for failing to stop drug

# Air attack on Afghan city of Herat Taliban set up new frontlines in north of Kabul

KABUL, Nov 27: The Taliban militia have established new frontlines 45 kilometres (about 28 miles) north of Kabul after capturing two more centres in an infantry drive against the rivals, the official radio said today, reports AFP.

A report monitored on the state Radio Shariat said the Taliban seized the villages of Kalakan and Istalif Tuesday afternoon "in a successful military operation by the forces of the Islamic army and the Mujahedeens."

The new frontlines were said to be around the old road district centre of Qarabagh. The report could not be independently confirmed.

The old road is one of the two northbound highways exiting Kabul, on which most infantry fighting between the Taliban and the coalition forces of ex-Kabul government troops and ethnic Uzbeks of northern warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostam, has been centred.

Following Tuesday's offensive, Radio Shariat reported that the frontlines were now around the district centre of Qarabagh, which is located just five to six kilometres up the old road from Kalakan.

Istalif, a village famous for its pottery, is located to the west of Qarabagh. This Taliban offensive has been a serious setback for ex-Kabul government commander Ahmad Shah Masood, who was pushed out of the Afghan capital by the Taliban September 27.

Masood, in alliance with Dostam's Uzbeks, managed a successful counter-attack to bring the anti-Taliban coalition to within 20 kilometres (about 12 miles) of the capital. This ground has now been lost for the third time.

Any bid for the recapture of Kabul by the anti-Taliban would now appear to be slim, especially in face of the coming winter snows which will slow

down, though not necessarily the fighting.

Civilians on foot but some in mostly overloaded buses, have fled the fighting north of Kabul in droves over the past few days, seeking sanctuary in Kabul.

Some civilians have complained of looting by Dostam troops in the field, which is considered detrimental to the popularity of the anti-Taliban alliance among the local population.

The fundamentalist militia, who have been ultra-strict in imposing Islamic law in areas under their control, have in general a reputation for being honest in their dealings with locals.

Given that Istalif has been captured by the Taliban, the fall of Qarabagh would seem imminent, due to the geographical relationship of the two centres.

If Qarabagh falls, the anti-Taliban alliance will have to withdraw to the provincial centre of Charikar, 65 kilometres (about 40 miles) north of Kabul, and tighten their defence around Bagram airbase, which is situated 50 kilometres (31

miles) north of the capital on the so-called new road.

A ceasefire between the warring parties is reported to be still on the United Nations agenda, but it is unclear whether the belligerents will be able to agree on mutually acceptable conditions.

Reuters from Peshawar adds: Warplanes of coalition forces fighting the radical Islamic Taliban militia bombed the western Afghan city of Herat late on Tuesday but caused no damage, a Taliban spokesman said.

The Peshawar-based Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) quoted a Taliban spokesman as saying three Russian-made Su-27 fighter jets bombed Taliban tank positions eight kilometres (five miles) west of Herat but caused no damage.

The AIP quoted witnesses as saying at least two people were wounded in the attack.

The spokesman said the attack on Herat, the main Taliban base in the west, followed advances by the Islamic militia in the remote north-western province of Badghis over the past two weeks



Vietnamese actress Nguyen Thuy Huong is all smile after she learnt that the Vietnamese film 'Nostalgie de Campagne,' won the 'Public Prize' during the closing ceremony of the 18th 'Three-continent festival' in Nantes Tuesday. Thuy Huong is the main actress of the film. At left is an unidentified translator. — AFP/UNB photo

# Jiang's visit to Delhi Sino-Indian deal likely to cool military tensions

NEW DELHI, Nov 27: Asian giants China and India will sign agreements to cool military tensions and boost trade during Chinese President Jiang Zemin's historic visit, officials said Tuesday, reports AFP.

Indian Foreign Secretary Salman Haider said India and China would also discuss issues which have clouded ties between the world's two most populous countries during Jiang's three-day visit beginning Thursday.

"It is going to be important and substantive," Haider said of the first visit to India by a Chinese president.

India and China fought a bitter war over their dispute 128,000-square-kilometre (51,200-square-mile) border in 1962.

Haider said the two sides would sign agreements on "confidence-building measures in the military field," on the maintenance of an Indian consul in Hong Kong after its takeover by China in July and a pact to curb drug trafficking.

"Reduction of troops on the borders appear to be on the cards," the Foreign Secretary said.

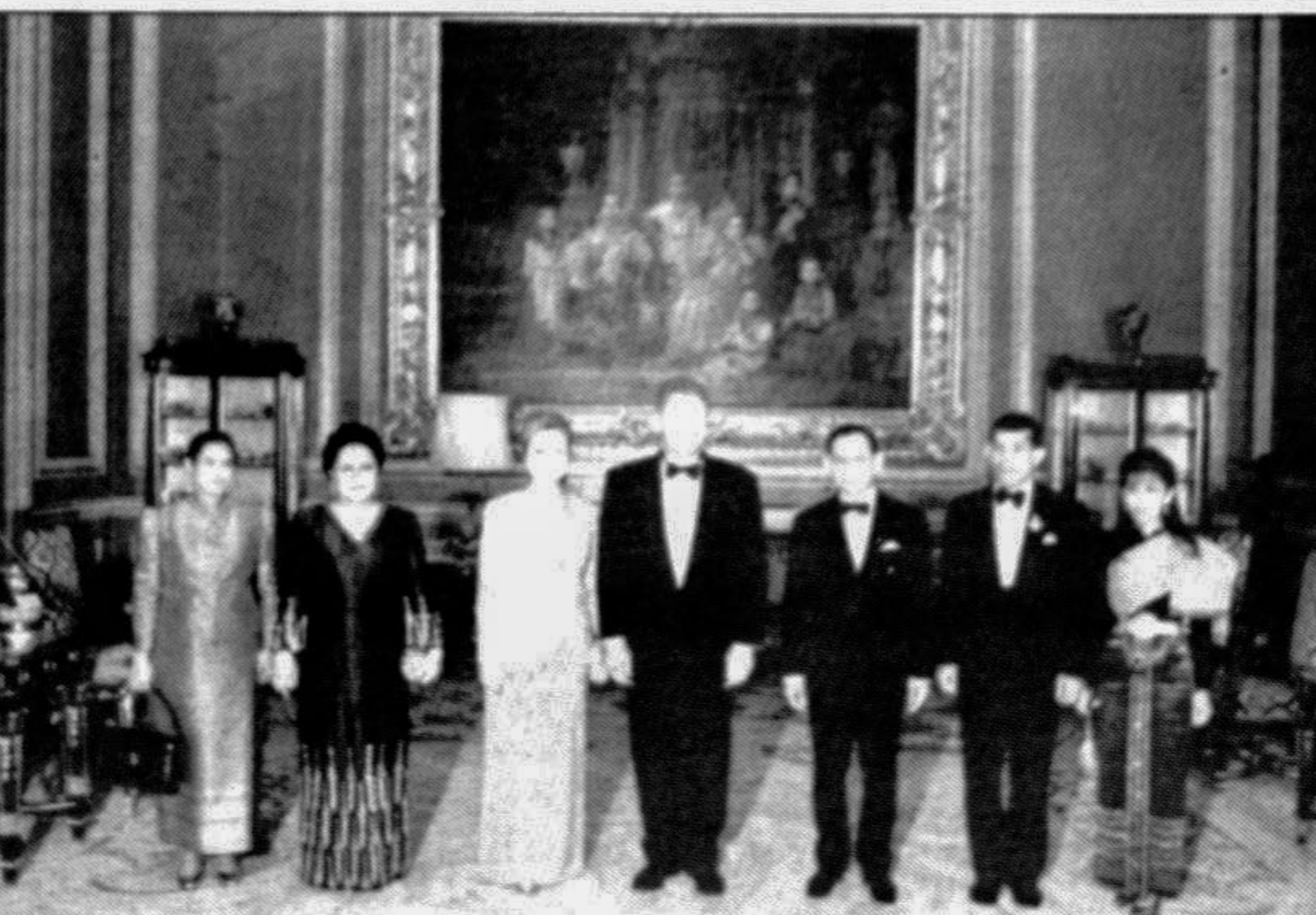
In the economic field, an agreement on bilateral investment protection and another on shipping was likely to be signed, he said.

"This visit is seen as a long-term effort to evolve relations without suspicions, and to make Sino-Indian frontier a border of peace," he said.

Haider said the two sides would discuss the supply of military hardware by China to Pakistan, which has fought three wars with India since 1947.

"We will also hold talks on the implementation of the 1993 Sino-Indian agreement on the maintenance of peace and tranquillity at the border, and discuss Sikkim."

China acknowledges the Himalayan territory of Sikkim as an independent territory, which became one of India's 25 states in 1975.



US President Bill Clinton and his wife Hillary (C) pose with the Thai royal family under the portrait of the King's grandfather, King Chulalongkorn, at the Grand Palace in Bangkok, Tuesday. From the left are, Crown Princess Sirindhorn, Queen Sirikit, Hillary Clinton, Bill Clinton, King Bhumibol Adulyadej, Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn and Princess Chulabhorn. — AFP/UNB photo

# China, Pakistan to play upon 'time-tested' bonds

ISLAMABAD, Nov 27: China and Pakistan will play upon their "time-tested" bonds as they work towards boosting defence and technical ties during Chinese President Jiang Zemin's visit next week, say officials and diplomats here, reports AFP.

The commander of China's Air Force, Yu Zhenwu, is already in Islamabad holding talks with Pakistani leaders ahead of Jiang's December 1-4 visit.

The Asian neighbours enjoy close economic cooperation and "we would like to have even greater cooperation in trade and technology," Pakistani President Farooq Ahmed Leghari told the PLA chief on Monday.

Leghari, who visited China in December 1994, hoped Jiang's visit would "further strengthen the exemplary cooperation" between the two countries.

Pakistan has increasingly relied on China to strengthen its defence capability since the United States imposed an arms embargo in 1990 over its controversial nuclear programme.

The country's half a million-strong army is equipped with Chinese tanks and its air force has inducted F-7 fighter jets, considered similar to the Russian-made Mig-19s.

In the ancient Bhudist town of Textile, some 20 kilometres (12 miles) west of Islamabad, China has built a heavy mechanical complex which is producing armoured personnel carriers and heavy military trucks as well as overhauling tanks.

It also manufactures heavy machinery for road construction, sugar and cement production and oil and gas and thermal and hydro power projects, officials said, adding it had started exporting some heavy machinery.



Iranians begin to remove satellite dishes from their homes on Tuesday. Iranian police are cracking down on TV satellite dishes in the Iranian capital Teheran as part of a crackdown on illegal reception of foreign television. Dishes were banned in April 1995, but residents surreptitiously continued to use them. The Voice of America (VOA) on October 25 began broadcasting a Farsi television programme via satellite. — AFP/UNB photo

# BRIEFLY

**Clinton ends Pacific tour:** US President Bill Clinton singled out military led Myanmar for criticism as he closed a 12-day Pacific trip filled with warm receptions and tours of ornate halls, AP reports from Thailand.

Without stopping to sleep, Clinton dashed from a glittering state dinner to begin the long trip home. His tone was tough in a speech at Chulalongkorn University, where he said the refusal of Burma's rulers to move toward democracy and the regime's involvement in narcotics, "both represent the absence of the rule of law."

**Russian guards kill 4 Afghans:** Russian border guards in Tajikistan killed four Afghans and detained two others when they attempted cross over into the republic from Afghanistan on Tuesday evening, military officials said, AFP reports from Dushanbe.

Following the incident, which took place near a border post about 220 kilometres to the south-east of the Tajik capital, soldiers seized 45 kilograms (100 pounds) of narcotics which they claim the rebels were attempting to smuggle into Tajikistan.

**KSA-China defence meet held:** Saudi Arabia's Defence Minister, Prince Sultan bin Abdul Aziz, discussed military cooperation in Riyadh with a visiting Chinese military officer, the official Saudi Press Agency said, AFP reports from Riyadh.

Prince Sultan discussed "means to develop military cooperation" between Riyadh and Beijing during talks Tuesday with the commander of China's second artillery corps, Lieutenant General Yang Guoliang, it said. Chi Haotian became the first Chinese Defence Minister to visit Saudi Arabia when he travelled here in May.

**Australia to recruit foreign pilots:** The Australian air force is recruiting foreign pilots to fly its fighter planes as Australian officers quit to take higher-paying jobs with commercial airlines, AP reports from Canberra.

Defence spokesman Brigadier Adrian D'Hage said Wednesday it expects to lose about 80 Australian pilots in the next 12 months. Six pilots from the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom have been recruited so far, D'Hage said. "Clearly we are losing more pilots than we'd like to lose," he told the Ten television network.

**ETA leader held in France:** French police on Tuesday arrested a man they suspect to be the second in command of Spanish Basque militant group ETA after he was spotted in a routine check at a toll booth, AP reports from Bayonne.

Juan Luis Aguirre Lete was arrested on a highway near this southwestern French city after police saw he had a pistol. Spanish police believe Lete heads ETA's commandos, police said on customary anonymity.

# France's Africa strategy key to Ghali's future

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 27: France's Africa strategy is the key to the battle over the future of UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, French officials are saying, reports AP.

Diplomatic sources say Paris' goal is either to force the Clinton Administration into accepting an extension of Boutros-Ghali's term, which expires Dec 31, or to stall the proceedings until French-speaking Africans line up behind a single new candidate.

If the strategy works, it will make sure that whoever heads the United Nations next year will be sympathetic and beholden to France. The key to the two-track French approach is

to keep the Africans solidly behind Boutros-Ghali for the time being to prevent candidates from Asia and other regions from emerging.

Diplomats note that French President Jacques Chirac will attend a summit of France and French-speaking African countries in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on December 4-6.

They speculated that France would seek to reinforce support for Boutros-Ghali, who speaks fluent French, during the summit. France believes having a French speaker sympathetic to Paris in the UN post will counter to some extent the strong influence of the United States and the role of English as the dominant language in the United Nations.

On Monday, Africans asked

for more time to consider endorsing someone other than Boutros-Ghali. The council will meet again Friday, although it is unclear whether the Africans will have a new candidate by then.

But British Ambassador John Weston, who voted for Boutros-Ghali, said the US veto created a "new situation" so "clearly we need an alternative basis to go forward." That appeared to indicate Britain might abstain on the next round, but Weston refused to confirm that.

In any event, the French strategy seems to guarantee that the selection process will drag out well into December.

The council must agree on a candidate and forward the name to the 185-member General Assembly for ratification, General Assembly

said that if the Africans were still behind the incumbent, "I don't see much reason for many countries to change their position."

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China may have 1m HIV cases by 2000

BELING, Nov 27: More than 1 million Chinese, or 10 times the present number, could be infected with the virus that causes AIDS by 2000 if China does not take proper steps to control the disease, an official newspaper said Wednesday, reports AP.

"We must take a fresh look at AIDS, re-evaluate its power, and the government's Health Ministry."

If our country does a good job of prevention and control, it is possible the number of people infected with the AIDS virus by the year 2000 can be kept to within 200,000 the newspaper said, citing experts.

# Mother Teresa facing multiple problems

CALCUTTA, Nov 27: A cardiologist treating Mother Teresa today deferred a scheduled heart test, saying she faced "multiple problems" and was not in stable condition after being hospitalised for heart failure last week, reports AFP.

Tarun Prohajar from the BM Birla Heart Institute, where the ailing nun was shifted from a nearby nursing home late Tuesday, said an angiography test, which would determine if she needed surgery to clear clogged arteries, would have to wait.

"There are some more risks this time, it is not straight forward like in 1993," he said, referring to an earlier angiography test and subsequent surgery.

Mother Teresa, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 for her missionary work in the Calcutta slums, was hospitalised on Friday after suffering left ventricular heart failure.

# US criticises Israeli pledge to ensure Jewish towns in WB

WASHINGTON, Nov 27: The United States criticised Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu Tuesday after he pledged to ensure Jewish towns on the West Bank will grow and prosper "forever," reports AFP.

"Certainly if you ahead to the peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, Israel and Syria, this is not useful," State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said. "It's not useful and it's not constructive."

Netanyahu earlier told Jewish settlers in Eli near the West Bank town of Ariel that "Ariel must expand, it needs more schools, swimming pools, houses, couples."

The United States has maintained over the past months that Jewish settlements are a "complicating factor" in the Middle East peace process but refrained from directly criticising Netanyahu for his drive to develop them.

# Muslim refugees attack int'l mediator in Sarajevo

SARAJEVO, Nov 27: Hundreds of Muslim women mobbed a car carrying a top international mediator Tuesday, pounding dents in his armoured BMW in their anger over husbands and homes lost to the Serbs, reports AP.

Diplomat Michale Steiner escaped injury from the women, many of them survivors of a murderous Serb onslaught on Srebrenica, but they demolished two other cars and beat a female passerby.

Steiner, a German deputy to Carl Bildt, the senior civilian administrator of the Dayton peace accord for Bosnia, expressed "full solidarity" with the women at a news conference after the riot.

# Off the Record

## It contains ashes of Mahatma Gandhi

NEW DELHI: Mahatma Gandhi's great grandson won control on Tuesday of a wooden box in a bank vault that he claims contains the ashes of modern India's founding father, reports Reuter.

The Supreme Court ordered a government-owned bank in the eastern state of Orissa to yield the box to Tushar Arun Gandhi, who has pledged to scatter the purported ashes of his great grandfather in the mighty Ganges river.

The sealed box, measuring 18 inches by 18 inches by 20 inches (45 cm by 45 cm by 50 cm), was deposited with the State Bank of India in Cuttack town on November 29, 1950.

Gandhi was shot dead by a Hindu fanatic on January 30, 1948, five months after India, spurred by the apostle of non-violence, won independence from Britain.

The box bears the inscription "it contains the ashes of Mahatma Gandhi", the Supreme Court said in a 10-page judgement that responded to a request by Tushar Arun Gandhi to take control of the box, stored in the bank's safe deposit vault.

## Killer's bid to figure his name in Guinness Book

NEW DELHI: A man who butchered at least 10 Sikhs with a meat cleaver during riots over a decade ago said he should be included in the Guinness Book of World Records after being handed his sixth death sentence, a newspaper reported Wednesday, says AFP.

Kishori Lal, a butcher by trade, carried out the killings during rioting in the Indian capital in 1984 following the assassination of prime minister Indira Gandhi by two of her Sikh bodyguards.

The times of India quoted him as saying after Tuesday's verdict: "It's the sixth time... my name should figure in the Guinness Book of World Records."

Additional sessions judge Shiv Narayan Dhingra, while handing out the verdict, said: "Kishori killed innumerable innocent Sikhs in a brutal manner in the riots." Keeping in view the ghastly manner in which Sikhs were burnt alive and the scale in which Kishori was involved, capital punishment is the only proper punishment for him."

## Canada for relief HQs in Uganda Zaire receives warning of rebel attacks from Angola

KINSHASA, Zaire, Nov 27: Zaire's government has received anonymous communications warning of rebel attacks on cities south of the capital, members of parliament said, reports AP.

The communiques say that anti-government rebels advancing from Angola to the south planned attacks on the border cities of Boma and Matadi in the Bas Zaire region, about 350 kilometres (210 miles) south of Kinshasa, the capital.

The Zaire army has been put on alert, according to members of parliament who met in an emergency session Monday. The Angolan ambassador to Zaire has denied any complicity by Angola in the alleged planned attacks.

Rebel leader Laurent Desire Kabila said Friday that his forces were advancing across Zaire toward the capital. Last month, his men overwhelmed badly equipped, demoralised Zairian troops and seized control of the key eastern cities of Goma, Bukavu and Uvira.

Reuter adds: Canada impatient with indecision on the eastern Zaire refugee crisis on Tuesday proposed that a military headquarters for relief operations be set up in Uganda.

Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy, announcing the proposal, also said Canada would push for air drops in Zaire to help those most affected.

## US press freedom awards for four journalists

NEW YORK, 27: Four editors and reporters were honored Tuesday by the Committee to Protect Journalists for risking their lives to cover news in strife-torn countries, reports AP.

Among those honored was a Kashmiri reporter from India, Yusuf Jameel, who narrowly escaped an assassination attempt last year that killed a photographer colleague.

Another award recipient, Osk Isik Yurtcu of Turkey, was unable to attend the ceremony because he is imprisoned. Yurtcu, editor in chief of the daily newspaper Ozgur Gundem, is serving a 15-year jail sentence for disseminating "separatist propaganda" and reporting on government suppression of Kurdish separatists and political torture.

The CPJ is a nonprofit, non-partisan, international organization founded in 1981 to monitor abuses of journalists and to promote press freedom around the world.

Another honoree, J Jesus Blancorolas, editor in chief of the Mexican weekly Zeta, was praised by journalist Geraldine Brooks as a pioneer of press freedom in Mexico.

Despite repeated threats from government and opposition parties over the years, Blancorolas has persisted in criticising government corruption and drug trafficking. His newspaper's office has been shot at and a popular columnist was murdered in 1988.