

## Int'l Development Confce told Women may expand notion of politics

WASHINGTON, Jan 17: Four politically-active women from four different nations agreed January 14 that politics is power and women need to move from women's participation to women's leadership in the political arena, reports USIS.

"Politics is about power: Politics is the area for negotiation of power," according to Devaki Jain, a member of the Karnataka State Planning Board and a leading political reformer for women in India.

Speaking before delegates to the International Development Conference in Washington, Jain stressed that women have "many ways of enhancing politics. They may not only transform politics but may expand the notion of politics."

Jain spoke about "Women's Political Presence and Women's Rights in India" during a luncheon on the second day of the January 13-15 conference. She

was joined by Nancy Birdsall, Executive Vice President of the Inter-American Development Bank, who announced the establishment of a World Bank fund to expand women's leadership in business and politics.

The fund, which will begin with a \$350,000 grant from Norway, and receive donations from organizations and foundations worldwide, is expected to reach 3.5 million dollars. Birdsall said that the money would be used to "educate political parties about women and to inform women about their (political) rights."

"Also speaking at the luncheon were Marcela Bordenave, National Representative of Congress (FREPASO), Argentina; Edith Semples, Ambassador of Uganda to the United States, and Kari Hellesnes, Member of Parliament for Norway.

## Mourners blame state govt for Samant murder

# Strike cripples Bombay

BOMBAY, Jan 17: A shut-down crippled Bombay today, a day after India's best-known unionist Datta Samant was gunned down in public, as thousands of angry mourners blamed the state government for the murder, reports AFP.

A spokesman at Bombay's police control room said buses, taxis and scooter-rickshaws went off the roads and factories were shut following a strike called by leftist and centrist were trade unions.

There were reports of isolated violence but police said they had the situation under control.

Samant, who once led 250,000 workers in the nation's longest strike, was travelling in a car with his doctor son and driver when they were ambushed by four gunmen in a scooter-taxi near his home in the suburb of Powal.

The assailants forced the car to stop, got out and shot the 65-year-old Samant several times at close range, police said. His son was unharmed but their driver was critically wounded.

Samant, who has twice been elected a provincial deputy, was rushed to his son's private hospital where he died as surgeons removed 10 bullets from his head, chest and stomach.

There were no claims of responsibility for the attack.

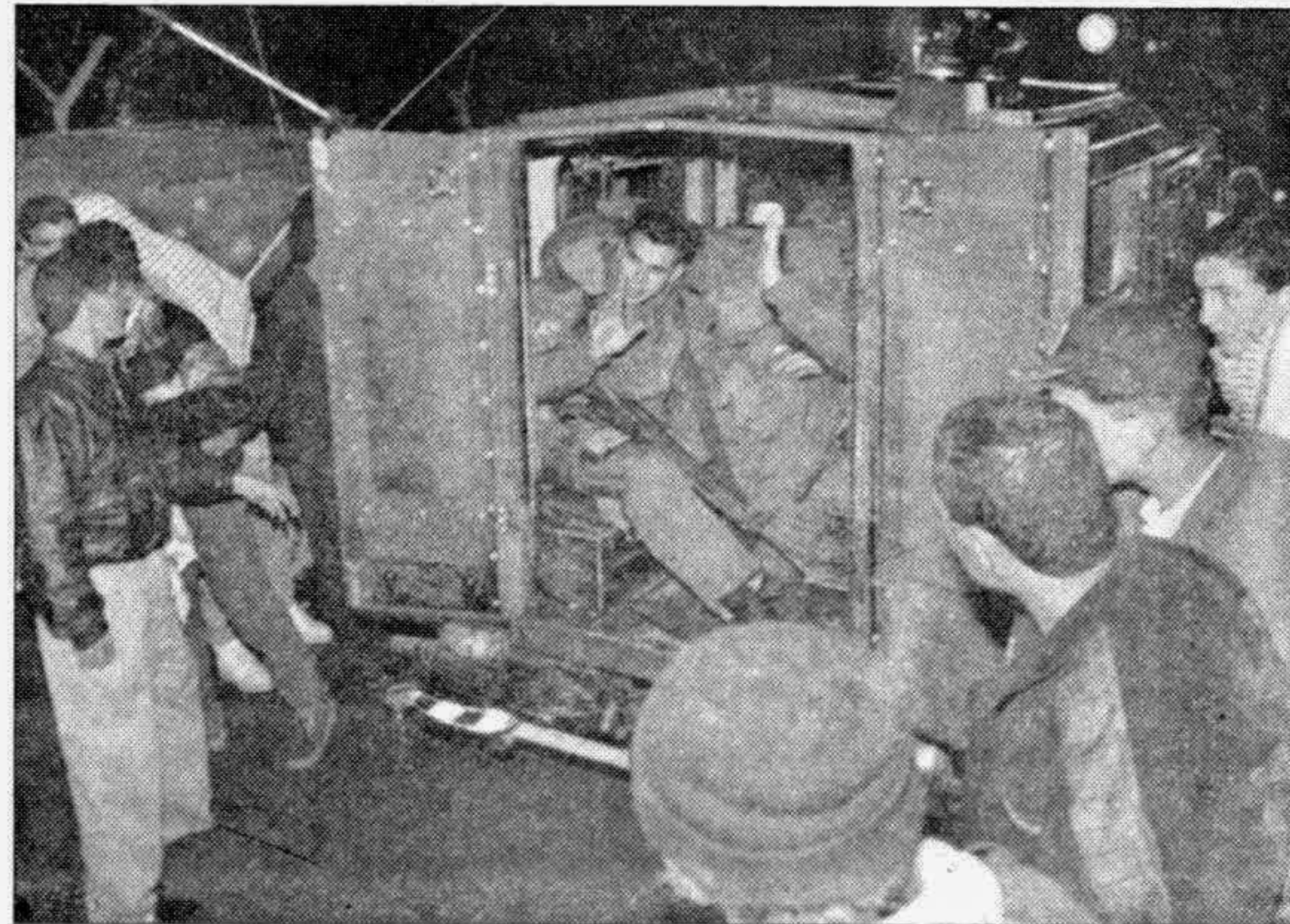
Angry workers put up blackboards condemning the assassination at street corners and blamed the Hindu nationalist combine running the western state of Maharashtra, of which

Bombay is capital, for Samant's killing.

Witnesses said some 45,000 people thronged Samant's tiny house in a working class district, forming snaking queues to pay homage to the leader and shouting slogans against Maharashtra's Shiv Sena (Shivaji's army) government.

"Long live Datta Samant," they shouted. "We vow revenge against the killers," and "down with the Shiv Sena."

Maharashtra Chief Minister Saund Shiv Sena leader Manohar Joshi and Deputy Chief Minister Gopinath Munde faced angry crowds an abuse late Thursday when they went to Samant's house to offer condolences and had to leave under tight security, witnesses said.



An Israeli soldier waves to celebrating Palestinians at the gate of the Israeli army headquarters in Hebron, where they gather after they learnt that the Israeli parliament ratified late Thursday, the agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority on the Israeli army's withdrawal from most of the West Bank city of Hebron. The headquarters will be in Palestinian control.

## HK, China agree on boundary talks

HONG KONG, Jan 17: After 156 years of British rule, Hong Kong and China signed an agreement Friday on the boundary separating this territory from the Chinese mainland, reports AP.

The agreement was signed in the Chinese city of Shenzhen, bordering Hong Kong, by John Ashton, deputy political adviser of the Hong Kong government, and Xiao Jinzhe, an official of the Guangdong Provincial Government.

With 165 days left before Hong Kong returns to Chinese sovereignty on July 1, the agreement removes "uncertainties and ambiguities and that ought to be in general good for the handover process," Ashton told reporters.

He said the boundary negotiations that lasted eight years were in response to needs arising from rapid economic devel-

opment on both sides that have turned the boundary into one of the busiest borders of the world.

Ashton said the agreement would not produce "a dramatic change to everybody's lives overnight," but would facilitate operations against "illegal cross-border activities."

"It removes one of the risk factors which potentially can lead to incursions," he added.

Previous Chinese incursions into Hong Kong waters to grab suspected smugglers had stoked up serious diplomatic tussles between China and the British colony.

The incidents provoked alarm about China's seemingly cavalier attitude toward the laws of the sea and concern that even though China does not recover Hong Kong until 1997, the colony has already lost control of its sea borders.

The new boundary is based

on clearly identifiable natural features rather than the arbitrary lines on maps, a statement said.

Ashton said the prolonged negotiations were due to complex questions involved.

"In some areas, the existing boundary simply isn't clear," he said, citing as an example the Shenzhen River, which is used to help define the dividing line, yet gradually changes course over the years.

Under the new boundary, Hong Kong will acquire about 100 hectares (250 acres) of land previously under the control of Guangdong province, and give back about 12 hectares (30 acres).

Ashton said follow-up work, including a joint survey with the Guangdong authorities of the entire boundary, will take three to four months.

## Gaddafi slates Hebron accord

TRIPOLI, Jan 17: Libyan leader Moamer Gaddafi, who opposes the Arab-Israeli peace process, denounced Thursday the Israeli-Palestinian agreement on the West Bank town of Hebron, reports AFP.

"The goal of Israel's obstinacy for the past few months was to oblige the Palestinians and the Arabs to accept this deception," the colonel was quoted by the official Libyan news agency JANA as saying.

"The Israeli military retreat from Hebron does not mean that the town has been freed. The (Israeli) military will continue to surround it from the outside and to occupy Palestinian lands," he said.

This was the first Libyan reaction to the agreement concluded early Wednesday by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

Syria, Iran and extremist Palestinian groups have also condemned the Hebron accord, under which the Israeli military will pull out of 80 per cent of the town where 400 Jewish settlers live amid 120,000 Palestinians.

## US Academy of Sciences signs deal with China

BEIJING, Jan 17: The US Academy of Sciences has signed a cooperation deal with its Chinese counterpart to work towards better resources management in the next century, Xinhua reported today, says AFP.

"The future of the world depends on the intelligent use of science and technology in the face of an expanding population," Academy president Bruce Alberts told the news agency.

"It is clear that in the next century, China and the United States will be the leading countries of the world and we both have the need and ability to work closely together," he added.

The agreement stipulates that the US Academy will devote "most of its funds for international cooperation" to programmes that allow young scientists from the Chinese Academy of Sciences to meet and cooperate with their US counterparts.

## China hands over remains of US airmen

BEIJING, Jan 17: China today handed over the remains of US airmen killed in a World War II crash following the disclosure of the crash site in southern China last year, reports AP.

The remains of the American flyers were handed over to US Ambassador James Sasser and loaded onto a US military transport plane in caskets draped with the stars and stripes to be flown to the Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii.

Ten crew members were on board the B-24 bomber when it crashed near Guilin in August 1944 while returning to its Chinese base from a bombing raid against Japanese ships near Taiwan.

Crashing on the edge of a cliff, 1,828 metres (6,032 feet) above sea level, the plane wreckage was scattered across a 500-metre deep ravine.

## Iliescu elected head of Romanian opposition

BUCHAREST, Jan 17: Former President Ion Iliescu was elected Friday head of the party he founded during the 1989 anti-Communist revolt, now the main opposition force in Romania, national radio reported, reports AP.

Iliescu, who is a member of parliament's upper chamber, has said he will battle corruption within his Social Democracy Party's ranks and turn it into "a constructive opposition."

His party holds 25 per cent of the seats in the bicameral parliament, making it the biggest single party. Other parties are smaller or have formed coalitions.

"The party was sanctioned by a negative vote, generated by the population's dissatisfaction and the way in which we ruled the country," Iliescu told party members at a party conference.

Iliescu lost to President Emil Constantinescu in a runoff in November, partly due to corruption in his party which also led to its defeat in general elections.

## Kremlin preparing to bring Romanov royal family back?

MOSCOW, Jan 17: The Kremlin is secretly preparing to bring Russia's Romanov royal family back to the country and give it a top role, a magazine reported Thursday, reports AFP.

Under a secret decree that has already been prepared, the descendants of Nicholas II, who was executed along with his immediate family by the Bolshevik revolutionaries in 1918, would be given an official status, the weekly Ogonyok reported.

Grand Prince Georgy Mikhailovich, 15, his mother Grand Duchess Maria Valentinovna and his grandmother Grand Duchess Leonida Goergevna, have been invited to return, the magazine said.

A government dacha in the village of Maloe Kolchugino, just outside Moscow, has been prepared and a former officer in President Boris Yeltsin's presidential guard has been chosen to tutor the grand prince, the report said.

The Kremlin flatly denied the article, as it has done other unconfirmed reports over the last weeks of an imminent return of the royal family.

According to Nicholas Urusov, part of the Russian nobility living in Paris, there may be something to the latest report.

The dacha in question was given to the grand duchess by the government six months ago, he told AFP. "There is nothing official," he said, but there is no smoke without fire.

There has been talk of bringing the imperial family back since 1993 when Grand Duchess Maria and her son travelled across Russia.

The Kremlin's most direct interest could be to reinforce the support for Yeltsin among the nationalists. But there is also the more elusive aim of restoring Russia's tattered sense of identity following the collapse of Soviet power.

## Off the Record

### Lead — yet another cause of tooth decay

LONDON: Lead from traffic fumes and old-fashioned plumbing may be rotting people's teeth, Spanish researchers were quoted as saying on Thursday, reports Reuters.

Francisco Gil and colleagues at the University of Granada found that adults and children whose teeth contained high levels of lead also had more tooth decay, staining and plaque, New Scientist magazine reported.

Children who had 10 or more cavities had an average of three times as much lead in their blood as children with no decay.

Gil's group who reported their findings in the science of the total environment, said lead may go directly into the teeth or may reach them via the bloodstream.

They said they thought lead attacked the enamel coating that protects the teeth.

Leaded petrol can release lead particles into the air, while drinking water can be polluted from pipes containing lead. Lead is known to cause brain damage and mental retardation.

### Jackson fever grips Montreux

MONTREUX, Switzerland: Jackson fever has hit the stately lakeside town of Montreux, reports AP.

With a black scarf over his nose and mouth, black shirt, dark slacks and red jacket, the megastar was spotted by adoring fans at the luxury Palace hotel, the Swiss mass-circulation tabloid Blick reported Thursday.

Jackson is being treated at the renowned "La Prairie" clinic in Montreux. There a nurse told the newspaper: "Mr Jackson has a cold. He has been given medicine."

La Prairie is famous for rejuvenation treatments and other aesthetic and rehabilitating cures.

Wednesday he was seen disappearing into the town's casino, but he remained for several hours. But first appearances were deceiving. The casino has a music studio with keyboards.

Later he was spotted in a car outside his hotel, signing autographs.

A fan, Fabio Purci, 13, said: "It is the real Michael Jackson. I have hundreds of books with his signature inside — and the autograph he gave me is absolutely identical."

### Mission of rescue lonely bull

SEOUL: Help is on the way for a lonely bull who washed up on a mine-strewn inlet in the Korean demilitarised zone, reports AP.

An animal doctor will be joined by Marines on their mission to Yoo-do islet Friday, military officials said.

The bull drifted downstream during summer floods and climbed onto the islet in the middle of the no-man's-land separating the rival Koreas. The 4-kilometre-wide (2.5-mile-wide) zone is so heavily mined that even soldiers fear to tread on it.

The bull's fate has drawn national attention since county officials asked the central government to help the bull earlier this month.

Any operation within the tense border zone risks armed clashes between North Korea and South Korea. The rivals are still technically at war.

### Di meddling in politics?

LUANDA, Angola: Dismissing claims back home that she was meddling in politics, Princess Diana ended a four-day tour to Angola on Thursday by pledging continued support for a Red Cross campaign to ban land mines, reports AP.

Before boarding her plane, the princess said her visit "convinced me that I must continue to play a part in the ongoing worldwide campaign to ban land mines."

Although Conservative politicians have slammed her trip, British public opinion largely backed the princess.

"Thank you ma'am, and please keep it up," read an editorial in the left-leaning Guardian newspaper, which praised Diana for taking a clear and unequivocal stand against the dangerous weaponry. The right-wing Daily Mail wrote: "Manifestly, Diana is doing good work out there — work for which she is wonderfully well-suited."

### Crime scene photos hit newsstands

BOULDER, Colorado: A supermarket tabloid with crime scene photos from the slaying of child beauty queen JonBenet Ramsey hit newsstands, but many outlets refused to sell it, reports AP.

Boulder County officials demanding return of the photos and a ban on their further publication, filed for a temporary restraining order Monday against The Globe, a 1.3-million circulation weekly. State Judge Roxanne Bailin did not immediately rule.

In a hearing conducted by telephone, attorney Tom Kelley, representing The Globe, argued against the order, saying the officials failed to prove any laws were broken.

JonBenet's parents, John and Patricia Ramsey, also have threatened a lawsuit against The Globe. The tabloid's editor, Tony Frost, defended its right to publish what it sees fit.

## Bid to seek soldiers' release Colombia offers direct talks with rebels

BOGOTA, Jan 17: President Ernesto Samper's government said Thursday it was ready to negotiate directly with the country's largest rebel group to gain the release of 60 soldiers held since Aug. 30, reports AP.

The president was prepared to meet face to face with rebels of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and has proposed a meeting in Costa Rica or an unspecified European country, according to an official in Samper's press office.

The official, who spoke on condition he not be further identified, confirmed a report by RCN radio that said the Red Cross would serve as intermediary in organizing talks.

After the government disclosure, Navy commander Adm. Edgar Romero announced that three marines were killed and eight wounded Thursday morning during a firefight with FARC guerrillas in northwestern Colombia.

Nine marines were taken captive by the rebels in the encounter near the rural town of Jurado, soldiers told Dr Jimmy Torres, director of the hospital 100 kilometres (60 miles) to the south in Bahia Solana, where some of the wounded were treated.

Romero, speaking at a Bogota news conference, said only that the nine marines were "missing." The soldiers had been on patrol.

There was no immediate word from the rebels on whether they would accept the government offer for talks, but such negotiations would boost the FARC's image. It has sought to use the captive soldiers as a bargaining chip to gain political legitimacy.

Costa Rica's deputy foreign minister, Rodrigo Carreras, told The Associated Press on Thursday that his country had not received a formal request to broker negotiations but was offering its services.

## Rafsanjani for political solution to Afghan crisis

TEHRAN, Jan 17: Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani told Pakistan's foreign minister Thursday that no military solution was possible for neighbouring Afghanistan's conflict, the Islamic Republic News Agency reported, says AP.

Rafsanjani, meeting with Shabzada Yagub Khan during his three-day visit to Iran, said only peaceful negotiations could end the fighting, the agency said.

"This crisis has no military solution. Neighbouring countries, including Iran and Pakistan, should help end these domestic conflicts through peaceful means with the participation of the warring factions," Rafsanjani was quoted as saying.

The Pakistan said the war in Afghanistan had not caused a rift between Iran and Pakistan. Both the Muslim countries, but

Pakistanis are mostly Sunni Muslims, while Iranians adhere to the rival Shiite sect.

Iran has been allied with ousted Afghan president Burhanuddin Rabbani, a Shiite, while Pakistan is widely believed to have given financial and military support to the Sunni Taliban militia, which drove Rabbani's government from the capital Kabul last September.

"Pakistan believes that the Afghan crisis, despite the negative propaganda, has not strained relations between Tehran and Islamabad. On the contrary, it has led to further cooperation between the two countries to help put an end to the civil war in Afghanistan," Khan was quoted as saying.

He said that the two neighbouring countries wanted to see peace in Afghanistan restored and its sovereignty respected.

During the meeting, Rafsanjani also gave priority to strengthening relations between Iran and Pakistan, saying that cooperation should not be affected by "minor issues."

Earlier Thursday, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Hassan Rowhani, called for a crackdown on terrorist groups in Pakistan.

The council handles all threats to national security and groups representatives from the interior, defence and foreign ministries as well as from the armed forces.

Sunni Muslim militants are believed to have assassinated two prominent Shiite figures in Pakistan earlier this month. The two Shiites — Zulfakar Ali Nakavy and Haji Ayoub Ali Saiky from the Nehzat Jaafari Movement.

## No apparent sign yet to resolve Peru's hostage crisis

LIMA, Jan 17: Through binoculars, police scrutinize the windows of the Japanese ambassador's residence for even the slightest movement. Reporters watch from rooftops nearby, reports AP.

Peru's hostage crisis has dragged on for nearly a month. Rebels still hold 74 captives. Hundreds of police and reporters are still staked out around the residence, in an upscale Lima suburb.

Elsewhere in the city, however, Peruvians have other things to think about. As the hostage standoff becomes routine, people have turned their attention back to the concern of daily life — jobs, summer vacations and the national soccer team.

"We only have time to work, not chat," said Maria Samanez as she cooked sweet potatoes at a grimy street stall in Lima's

working-class neighborhood of La Victoria.

That attitude suits the government just fine.

The Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement thrives on publicity, and Peru's leaders are trying to take the spotlight off this rebel group, which stormed the ambassador's residence during a diplomatic party Dec. 17.

This week, the government's chief negotiator in the hostage standoff asked TV executives to scale back coverage.

And President Alberto Fujimori seized a state visit by his Ecuadorian counterpart to show Peru's affairs were in order. Photos of the visit knocked the hostage story off the front pages of Peru's newspapers.

"It indicates, 'I'm here and life goes on as usual. ... I'm ready to wait until the cows come home,'" Hernandez de Soto, head of an economic think tank

and a former Fujimori adviser, said of the state visit.

Among the hostages are Peruvian Foreign Minister Francisco Tudela and others of political value — judges, congressmen, police generals and a younger brother of Fujimori. Hundreds have been released, the last batch on Jan. 1.

But while the hostages may be important to Peru's government, they have little relevance to ordinary Peruvians.

"Those are people who don't have anything to do with us," said Julio Ugarte, a parking lot attendant in La Victoria. "The terrorists aren't representatives of the people, because nobody supports them. Nor are the hostages."

These days, Lima residents drive 45 minutes to the beaches to escape the summer heat. They honked car horns and danced in the streets Sunday af-

ter Peru beat Chile 2-1 in a World Cup soccer qualifying match.

But that doesn't mean the hostages are forgotten. The soccer coach dedicated the victory to the remaining captives. Red-and-white national flags fly in solidarity over many homes.

People have little sympathy for the rebels, who demand freedom for hundreds of jailed comrades. The Tupac Amaru has won few converts in a nation exhausted by 16 years of rebel violence; that's why the 20 or so rebels inside the ambassador's residence cherish the media attention the government is trying to deny them.

Many Peruvian TV journalists complied when Education Minister Domingo Palermo asked them to cut coverage. Palermo, a major shareholder in Lia's Channel 9 television

station, owns stations in four northern cities. The media rely heavily on government advertising.

Several TV vans have left the hostage site, where camera crews and photographers sleep in cars or deck chairs in the street under klieg lights. Some residents say police have told them they are aiding terrorism by allowing reporters to work from their homes.

In the first development in days, guerrillas said Wednesday they accepted the government's proposal to create a peace commission to mediate.

Television stations, which once routinely broke into regular programs with updates, waited until 7 p.m. newscasts to report the latest. Even then, they cited a government statement detailing the rebel response instead of talking to a rebel spokesman.

## Sudan rallies troops for battle against Ethiopia

KHARTOUM, Jan 17: Sudan's President Omar al-Beshir on Thursday rallied troops for a "decisive battle" against Ethiopia as a rebel offensive against his government threatened to become a full-scale international war, reports AFP.

Sudan has accused its neighbour of supporting the broadening rebel offensive which began on Sunday.

"The decisive battle has begun," Beshir said in Khartoum as Sudan sent a 30-truck convoy of troops and supplies to engage rebels in the east.

In an address targeted at the Ethiopian leadership, he said: "When you arrived starving, we gave you food, when you came to threaten us, we calmed you down and now that you have come as invaders, we are going to give you a lesson you will never forget."

His comments came as the Sudanese opposition vowed to broaden its offensive which has spread from the southeastern border with Ethiopia to the northeast region of Kassala — over 500 kilometres (300 miles) away — on the borders with Eritrea.

Hashimoto to visit China in Sept

TOKYO, Jan 17: Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto will visit Beijing around September to commemorate the 25th anniversary of normalised diplomatic relations between Japan and China, the Yomiuri Shimbun said today, reports AFP.

Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Kikeda will travel to Beijing sometime this spring to prepare for the visits.