

# BRIEFLY

## Israel seeks to nab PA spy chief:

Israel has issued an arrest warrant for a Palestinian intelligence officer on charges he was involved in the deaths of two Arab land dealers, Jerusalem police said Thursday. It also filed a complaint against the Palestinian Authority with the United Nations, AP reports from Jerusalem.

Israel wants to arrest Hussein Saadeh, head of Palestinian intelligence in the West Bank city of Ramallah, said Jerusalem police spokesman Shmuel Ben-Ruby.

The two victims, Farid Bashiti and Ali Jamhour, were suspected by the Palestinians of having sold land to Jews. Both were residents of Jerusalem and had Israeli identity cards, but it was not clear if either held Israeli citizenship.

**CIA agent jailed for 23 yrs:** Harold Nicholson, the highest-ranking CIA agent ever charged with spying, was sentenced Thursday to 23 years in prison, the Justice Department said, AFP reports from Washington.

Nicholson, 46, pled guilty to espionage after prosecutors accused him of selling information to the Russians from June 1994 until his arrest in November 1996.

The 16-year veteran of the Central Intelligence Agency earned some 180,000 dollars from the Russians and could have been sentenced to life in prison. He was sentenced in Federal Court in Alexandria, Virginia.

**2 killed in US shootout:** A plastics worker opened fire at a company in Santa Fe Springs Thursday after arguing with a colleague, killing two people and injuring four before turning the gun on himself, police said, AFP reports from Los Angeles.

After the altercation, plastics inspector Daniel Marsden, 38, began running through the building and shooting those in his path, said police spokesman Chuck Drylie.

Of the fatal victims, one aged 38, died of a bullet wound to the chest, and another, 55, died as a result of his multiple injuries.

**4 Russian journalists freed:**

Four Russian journalists who were kidnapped and taken hostage in Chechnya over three months ago have been released, Russian news agencies reported early yesterday, Reuter says from London.

Interfax and Itar-Tass agencies, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), said the freed journalists would return to Moscow shortly.

Three of the journalists are from Radio Russia and the fourth is a correspondent for Itar-Tass news agency.

**Book on Jagjivan Ram published in Delhi:**

The Vice President, Dr K R Narayanan, Thursday released the book Adhunik Bharat Ke Nirmata Babu Jagjivan Ram in PTI says from New Delhi.

The book, authored by Dr O P Maurya and published by the publication division, describes the various facts of the life, works and achievements of Jagjivan Ram.

Hailing Babuji as one of the pillars of modern India, Dr Narayanan said that he built India from the grass roots and gave it its finishing touches from the top.

**Canadian killed in India:** A Canadian citizen, suspected of being the mastermind in the 1985 bombing of an Air India Jumbo Jet 'Kanishka', was killed in police custody in India, CBC radio reported on Thursday, AFP says from Toronto.

All 329 people aboard the Air India Boeing 747 died when it exploded off the coast of Ireland on a flight from Canada, in a terrorist act blamed on Indian Sikh militants. 278 of the people on board were Canadian citizens.

The radio said, sources have confirmed that Talwinder Singh the chief suspect, a Canadian citizen, was captured, interrogated and then killed by Indian police.

**US, ROK, DPRK officials meet in NY:** US, North and South Korean officials met in New York Thursday for the second time in a week to try to narrow differences over proposed four-party Korean peace talks, the State Department said, Reuter reports from Washington.

The department's Korean office director Mark Minto led the US delegation. Names of the North and South Korean negotiators were not immediately available.

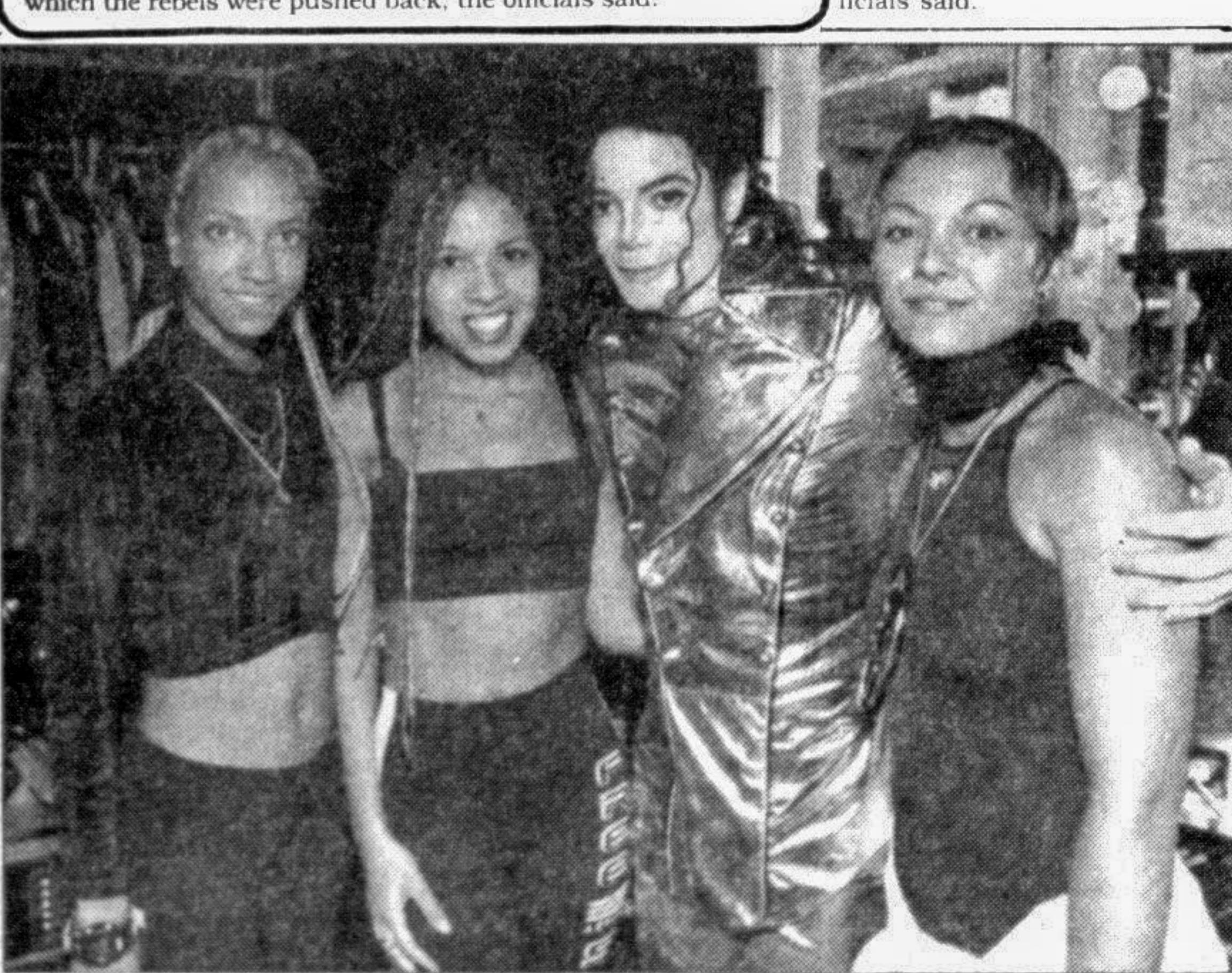
**The talks aim to win Pyongyang's acceptance of a US-South Korean proposal launched last year to hold negotiations also involving China; on a peace treaty to replace the armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War.**

**Rebel leader killed in Colombia:**

A rebel soldier believed to be a leader of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) was killed in a clash at a border post near the Arauca river, military officials said Thursday, AFP says from Caracas.

"Commandant" Juan Mecha, member of the command of a FARC column, died in a dawn raid Wednesday by rebels on a battalion of paratroopers in Apure state some 600 kilometers (372 miles) southwest of the capital.

A senior Venezuelan army officer, Lieutenant Colonel Henry Morales Hernandez was shot twice in the leg in the attack, during which the rebels were pushed back, the officials said.



US mega pop star Michael Jackson poses with Ricky, Lee and Jazzy (L to R) of the German girlie rap group Tic Tac Toe prior to his concert in Cologne's Muengersdorfer Stadium Thursday. Following Michael Jackson's wish, Tic Tac Toe will perform as warm-up act during his concerts in Gelsenkirchen on June 15 and at the Hockenheimring on August 10. — AFP/UNB photo

## Revolution in disease diagnosis, drug testing

CANBERRA, June 6: Australian scientists, after a decade of secret research, yesterday unveiled a microscopic machine that could revolutionise disease diagnosis and drug testing, reports Reuter.

The Nanomachine is a tiny biosensor that combines biology and physics — with moving parts the size of molecules — to detect molecules and identify minute amounts of substances.

Research team leader Bruce Cornell said the sensitive device can detect a range of substances, including drugs, hormones, viruses and pesticides and can identify gene sequences.

This biosensor is a unique blend of the ability of biology to identify individual types of molecule in complex mixtures, with the speed, convenience and

low cost of microelectronics."

Cornell, from the cooperative research centre for molecular engineering and technology, said in a statement.

The sensor, tipped to be a billion dollar bonanza for Australia when it goes into commercial production in about two years, is the world's first functioning Nanomachine — machines with parts measured in billions of a metre.

Cornell and his team say it is so sensitive that if one sugar cube was thrown into Australia's world famous Sydney harbour, it could measure the increased sugar content.

"We should really accept that we have done so little," Razali said.

"Five years down the road it is good that we are able to take stock and fail ourselves for our incompetence."

The device will allow simple detection of almost all diseases within minutes from a small blood or saliva sample — ending the need to wait days for pathology test results.

"The new NATO can have a positive influence in the Mediterranean," Secretary-General Javier Solana wrote in an article published recently in three Arab newspapers. "To help build a peaceful, friendly, economically vibrant Mediterranean region is a major

strategic objective."

As they fly into Madrid the alliance leaders have only to glance at the map to understand why Spain and Portugal are pressing them not to neglect the southern flank.

Lisbon is closer to violence-wracked Algiers than it is to Paris, while the southern tip of Spain lies less than 20 kilometers (12 miles) from the Moroccan coast. By comparison, the plains of Poland and Hungary can appear remote from mainland Europe's most westerly nations.

Other NATO allies on the Mediterranean, including France and Italy, have backed the call of tighter relations with their neighbors to the south.

To further bolster the southern flank, France and Italy also lobbied at a meeting of NATO foreign minister outside Lisbon last week for Romania and

Slovenia to be included along with Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, when the alliance starts its eastward enlargement.

To meet concerns of southern allies the North Atlantic Treaty Organization launched a "Mediterranean dialogue" in 1995 with the six North African and Middle Eastern nations.

Solana's predecessor as NATO chief, Willy Claes, said at the time that the new links would help counter Islamic fundamentalism, which he warned was "at least as dangerous" as the communist threat once faced by the alliance.

NATO stressed it was not seeking new enemies, but its decision to open contacts with friendly countries in the region reflected growing concern about and arc of instability stretching along NATO's southern flank from the Balkans, though the

alliance plans to create a new structure that will allow each of the five Mediterranean nations to hold regular meeting with the NATO allies.

"It will provide the possibility of greater contact and give us a greater appreciation of the

worries and preoccupations of the Mediterranean countries," said Javier Conde, Spain's ambassador to NATO.

Other ideas on the table include offering observer status at some NATO military exercises, inviting delegations on fact-finding visits to NATO headquarters, and opening more places on peacekeeping and other courses at NATO's military schools.

"We're talking about making NATO more transparent," says Rodica Radian-Gordon, an Israeli diplomat involved in the NATO talks. "It's upgrading the dialogue, making it more political."

The aim is to build confidence and reduce mutual mistrust.

"We have got to spend more money on getting these people to know what NATO is all about," said Conde.

## International

# PA rejects Netanyahu's ideas of peace accord

JERUSALEM, June 6: Palestinian leaders on Thursday rejected Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's proposal to give them isolated chunks of the West Bank in a permanent peace agreement, reports AP.

"I think the idea is a very simple reflection of the Israeli position of devouring land," said Marwan Karanfani, a spokesman for Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. "It's not only a non-starter, but a diversion from the main principle of land for peace."

On Wednesday, Netanyahu had outlined his ideas for a permanent peace agreement with the Palestinians to the Israeli Cabinet.

Netanyahu did not present any maps, but Israeli commentators said Thursday that according to the prime minister's outlines, Israel would seek to retain control of up to 55 percent of the West Bank.

The Palestinians hope to establish a state in all of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with east Jerusalem as a capital. Israel captured those territories in the 1967 Mideast war.

Under the Netanyahu plan, Israel would retain West

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dous adjustment of expectations by the Likud Party. For the first time in its history, it admits there will be another entity" between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean, Bar-Ilan told The Associated Press.

He said he expected the plan would win the support of four-fifths of the Israeli population.

"There may be attacks from the extreme left or the extreme right, but the centre will support this plan," Bar-Ilan said.

In his appeal for a broad consensus, Netanyahu presented his proposal as an updated version of a plan presented to the Israeli Cabinet in 1968 by Yigal Allon, a leading figure in the Labour Party and mentor of the late Yitzhak Rabin.

The Allon plan was never formally adopted but served successive Labour governments as a guide for Jewish settlement construction in the West Bank. Under Allon's proposal, Israel would retain about 20 percent of the West Bank, including the Jordan Valley and areas around Jerusalem, and the Palestinians would end up with a single land unit in the rest.

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Bank land surrounding Jerusalem, including the Jewish settlement of Maale Adumim east of the city. It would also annex the Jordan valley and large settlement blocks, including Gush Etzion south of Jerusalem.

Israel would also seek to retain control over major West Bank roads and water sources.

If implemented, the plan would leave the Palestinians with disconnected patches of land that would make it very difficult to establish a state.

Netanyahu's senior aide, David Bar-Ilan, confirmed that there would be no geographic continuity, but said safe passages could be established between Israeli and Palestinian areas.

The proposal also implied that some smaller Jewish settlements would have to be dismantled or come under Palestinian sovereignty. Bar-Ilan said the proposal was a departure from the ideology of the ruling Likud Party, which had maintained that Israel must maintain control over all of the West Bank and Gaza.

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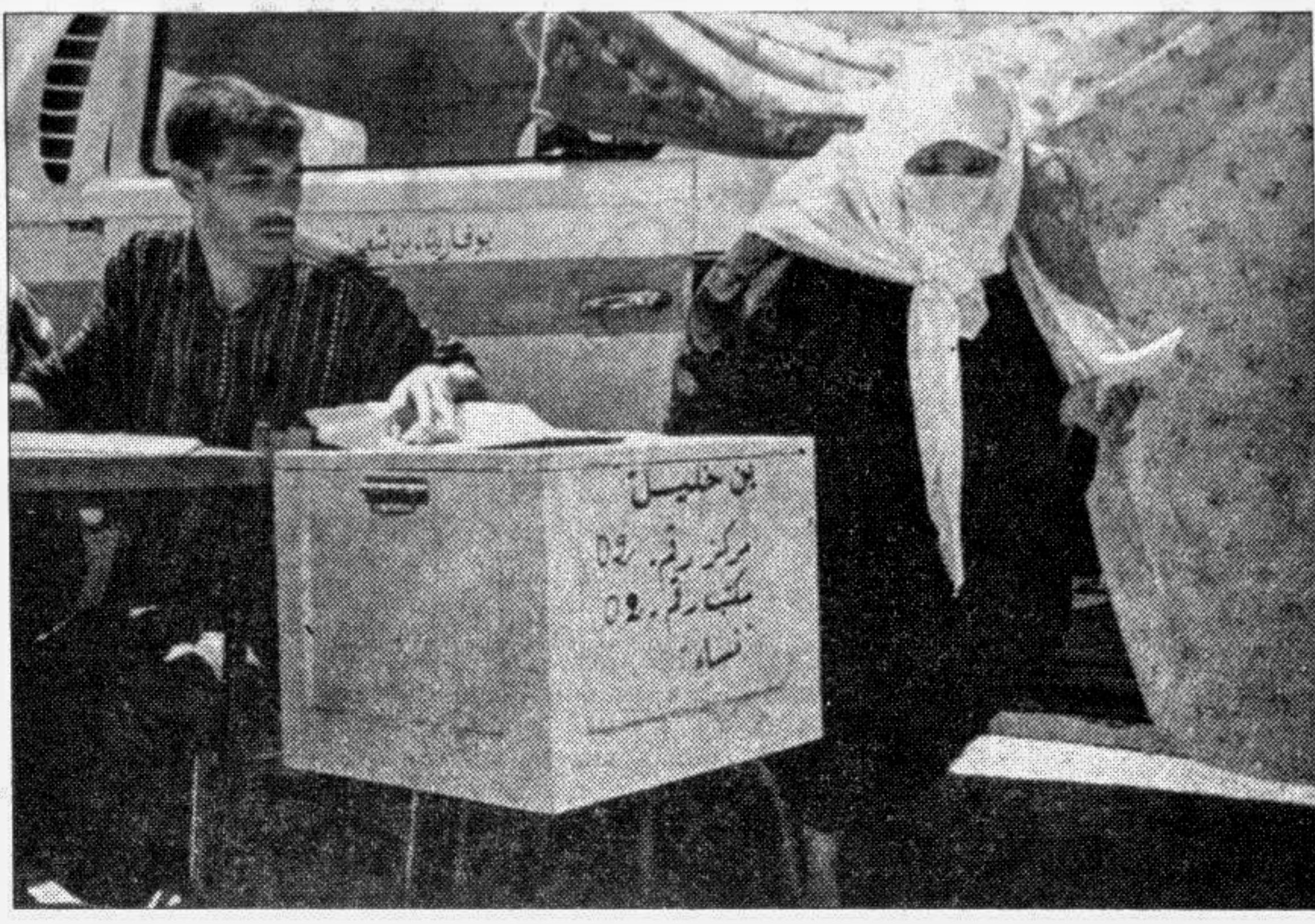
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An Algerian woman prepares to cast her ballot Thursday at a mobile voting station in an Algiers' suburb. Algerians went to the polls to elect a legislature for the first time since 1992, with the fear of more terrorist attacks looking over them.

— AFP/UNB photo

## Opposition parties heading for defeat in Algerian polls

ALGIERS, June 6: Officials

early Friday reported lower-than-expected turnout in parliamentary elections, pointing to defeat of opposition parties but also weak support for the army-backed regime, reports AP.

Judge S Sambandam said he "took cognizance" of formal charges alleging that the former screen idol, worshipped by fans, had saluted away "at least 19 million dollars.

A 30-member police team

has given the court 750 documents showing that Jayaram and her cronies had acquired at least 160 plush properties, including lavish town houses and country estates besides a treasure trove of jewellery.

"The actual value of the as-

sets might be 10 times more as the calculations are based on the registration value of the properties and not current real estate prices," an official said.

Jayaram's main house in Madras disgorged 10,500 sarees, 350 pairs of shoes and 26 kilograms (57.2 pounds) of gold after a police raid last year.

Low turnout was expected to undercut Zeroual's chief rival

in the elections, the moderate Islamic leader Sheikh Mahfoud Mahfoud.

Mahfoud, who leads the Movement for a Society of Peace and won 25 percent in the presidential election, filed complaints for nearly 400 cases of election fraud.

The party later said the number would climb with more protests, including tampering with so-called "itinerant polling stations" used to gather voters from the scattered population.

"Movable polling stations still belong to the single-party era," he told a news conference late Thursday night.

But the low turnout would also hurt Zeroual, a retired general strengthened by the 75 percent turnout rate in 1995 when he was first elected to the job to which he was appointed.

Exiting his polling booth on Thursday, Zeroual asked the Algerian people "to vote to combat terrorism." The Interior Ministry even extended voting an extra hour Thursday night in apparent hope of boosting participation.

The military patrols underlined the strife since the January 1992 army coup that aborted the nation's first multiparty parliamentary vote to thwart a likely