

Differences remain on key issues as G-8 summit ends

DENVER, June 23: World leaders tried to wrap up their first Summit of the Eight with a grand show of harmony, but they could not paper over differences on everything from the economy and Africa to the environment and the United Nations, reports AP.

President Clinton, who as host got to set the agenda, labeled the three days of discussions by leaders of the world's seven richest economies and Russia a huge success that had advanced the causes of global peace and prosperity.

"Here in Denver, we have actually made real progress on problems that matter to our people," he told reporters at a closing news conference Sunday.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin also was ecstatic, posing proudly with the other leaders for all the class pictures — the perfect symbol that Russia is

now a full-fledged member of the group.

"All the talk has been about the G-8. The eight, this, the eight that. The G-8 has become a reality," he declared Sunday.

The traditional Group of Seven — the United States, Japan, Germany, Britain, France, Canada and Italy — went out of the way to demonstrate that Russia is now a member of the club. The final communiqué praised the economic reforms Russia has undertaken and held out the hope of more prizes down the road, including membership in the World Trade Organisation.

But on other issues, there was a lot less unanimity. Clinton found himself standing alone on such issues as reducing the carbon dioxide emissions that contribute to global warming.

The European countries had pushed for specific reduction

targets, something the United States opposes, and Clinton's position prevailed.

German Chancellor Helmut Kohl complained that because of the American position, "We could not reach more" in terms of cleaning up the environment. French President Jacques Chirac was even more blunt, terming the United States "One of the world's biggest polluters," with "each American responsible for three times more (CO₂ emissions) than each French person."

France and the United States also were at loggerheads over the proper way to help Africa — the world's poorest continent. Here, the communiqué took the classic approach: It included calls for the more expensive direct foreign aid that France wanted and the cheaper trade benefits and debt relief advocated by the Americans.

On the United Nations, it

was Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien who took the sharpest jibe at the US position that the world body must streamline and economise to continue receiving American payments. The United States owes 819 million dollars in back dues, money that the US Congress is withholding pending UN reforms and a cut in the US annual assessment.

"I don't accept the notion that one country or two countries will dictate the policies of an international organisation like that," Chretien said, suggesting that the United Nations move its headquarters to Montreal.

Remarks that Clinton made upon his arrival in Denver also ruffled some other leaders.

"We are not in the process of trying to hold a competition between the American and European (economic) models," said Jacques Santer,

Troops resume advance into LTTE-held areas

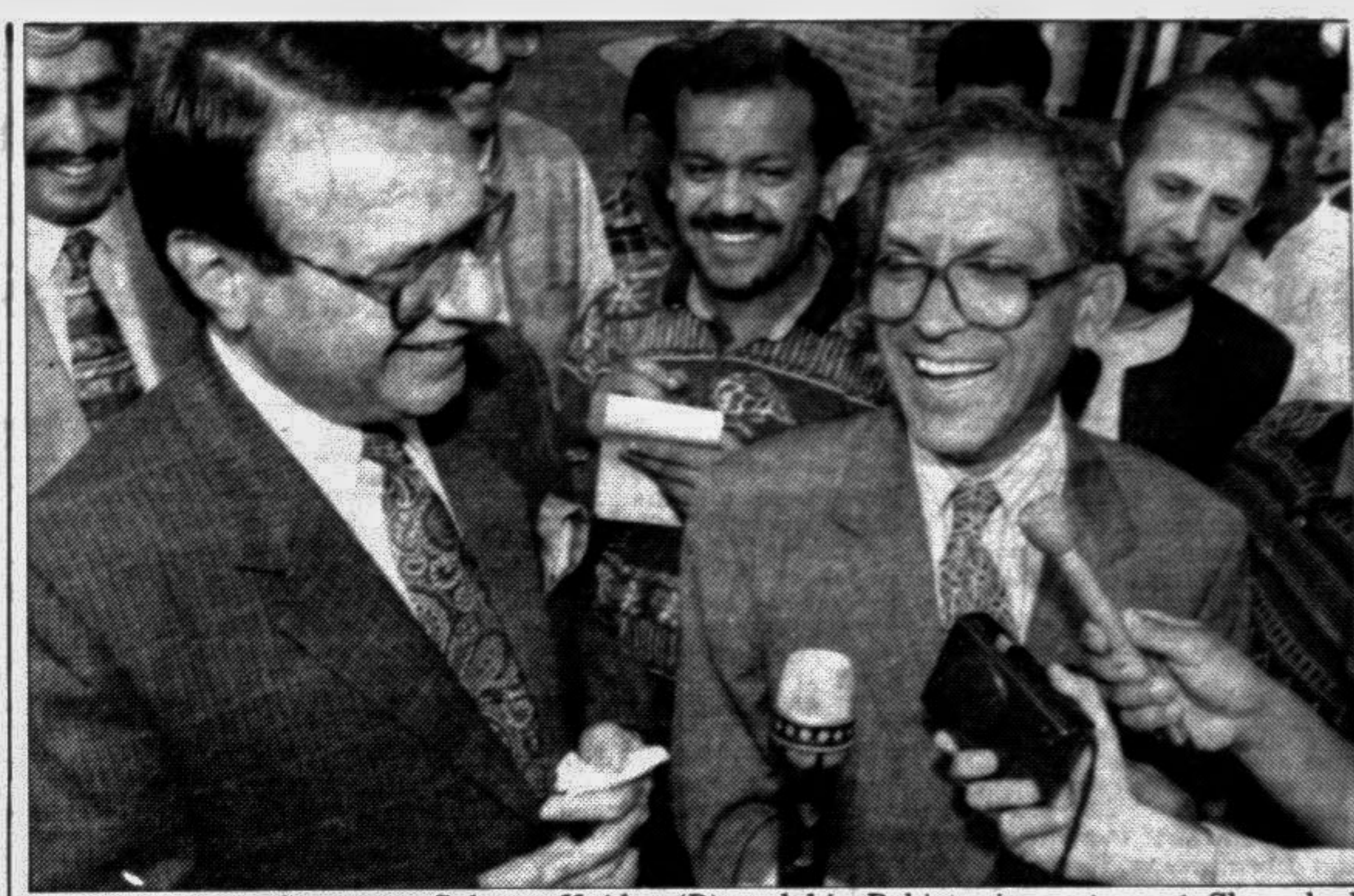
COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, June 23: After rebuilding their defences, government troops resumed their two-prong thrust into Tamil rebel territory in northern Sri Lanka on Monday, military officials said, reports AP.

War planes and artillery pounded rebel positions before two columns of infantry soldiers advanced from the villages of Periyamadu and Nedunkeni that were captured shortly after the offensive began May 13, officials said.

Details of the fighting were not immediately available, said the officials who cannot be identified under briefing rules.

The troops are trying to converge at Puliyanakulam, a town 235 kilometers (146 miles) northeast of the capital, Colombo.

The troops are trying to capture a vital 88-kilometre (55 miles) road to the government-controlled Jaffna Peninsula, home to a half a million Tamils. The peninsula is now accessible only by air and sea.



Indian Foreign Secretary Salman Haider (R) and his Pakistani counterpart Shamshad Ahmed (L) laughs during an informal chat with the press after their six-hour meeting at the Murree hill resort 50 kilometres north of capital Islamabad, Sunday. Haider said the two sides had worked hard and made considerable progress. — AFP/UNB photo

CIA report on China's aid to build Pak missile factory ignored

WASHINGTON, June 23: The White House and State Department have ignored a CIA report that China helped Pakistan construct a factory to manufacture medium-range ballistic missiles, Time magazine reported on Sunday, reports Reuter.

The magazine said US intelligence services discovered the facility near Rawalpindi in late 1995 and concluded that China was not only selling missiles to Pakistan but also helping the Pakistanis build a factory to manufacture them.

If confirmed, such a report could endanger the Clinton administration's policy of extending most favoured nation

(MFN) trading status to China, due to be discussed this week in Congress.

President Bill Clinton declined comment on the report, saying he could not discuss "Alleged intelligence reports."

"I think it's fair to say that on all these issues, we will not overlook them, we will not walk away from them, and we will make appropriate determinations and take appropriate action," Clinton told reporters in Denver, venue of a meeting of the Group of Seven industrialised countries.

"The national security of the country is always going to be the most important thing," he said.

Chief of Kashmiri militant group with 5 members held

SRINAGAR, June 23: Police in the northern state of Jammu-Kashmir said Monday they have arrested the chief and five members of a guerrilla outfit blamed for two bombings in the state capital, reports AP.

Ghulam Rasool Shah, the chief of the Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen, a pro-Pakistan group, was charged with trying to destabilise the state government through bomb attacks, said state police chief Gurbachan Singh Jagat.

The others arrested included the financial controller of the group, one of the most active rebel outfits fighting for independence of the northern state.

All six men were picked up in Srinagar last week and charged with also trying to kill state government ministers through such attacks. Jagat told a news conference in Srinagar, the state capital. He blamed the group with carrying out two bomb attacks in Srinagar in December and January that killed eight persons.

Vietnam's ruling troika to resign collectively

HANOI, Vietnam, June 23: Vietnam's ruling troika will collectively step down from the National Assembly to make way for new leadership, a government official said Monday, reports AP.

Premier Vo Van Kiet, President Le Duc Anh and Communist Party General Secretary Do Muoi will not run for reelection when Vietnam goes to the polls in July, National Assembly spokesman Nguyen Sy said.

Muoi, 80, will retain his party leadership — an appointed position independent of the National Assembly.

Kiet, 74, and Anh, 76, will both vacate their offices when they give up their legislature seats. Vietnam's president and premier must be members of the

National Assembly.

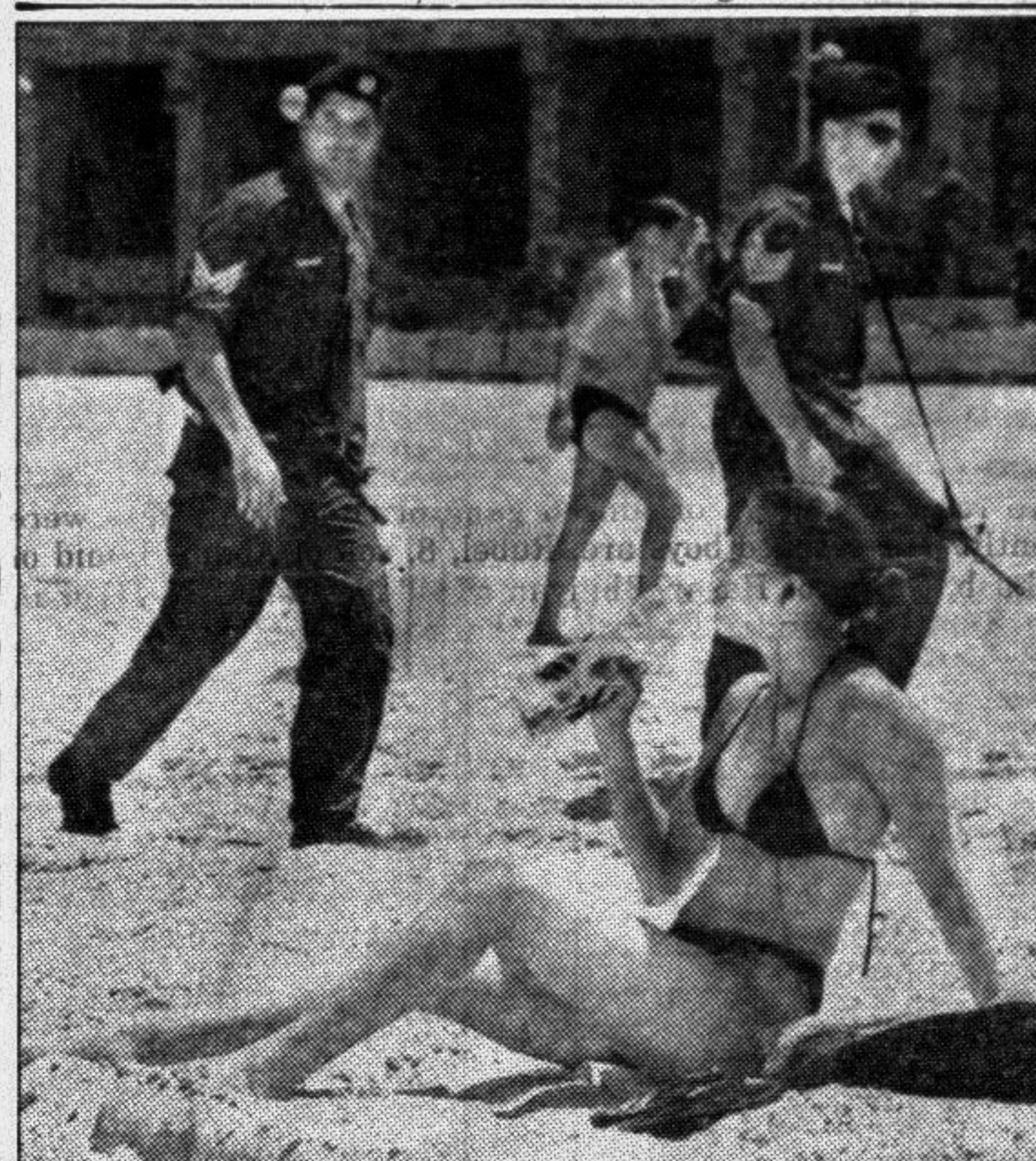
The resignations were based on individual decisions and not by a government or Communist Party push to change the country's leadership, Dung said.

The three leaders were asked by the central government and many officials to run again for the National Assembly, Dung said. "They all requested to stay out right from the beginning."

It was unclear who might succeed either Kiet or Anh.

Their absence from the National Assembly does not exclude them from membership in the powerful Politburo.

"The reason given for their stepping down was that all three are becoming old and they would like to focus on Party affairs," Dung said.



Israeli border police patrol the beach in Tel Aviv Sunday. Police stepped up patrols on Israel's Mediterranean beaches and placed checkpoints at Tel Aviv's main entrances after an attempted shoredside bombing was foiled Friday by a thief. — AFP/UNB photo

30 killed in 3 days of fighting in Bangui

BANGUI, June 23: Around 30 people have died in three days of fighting between disaffected troops and peacekeepers in the Central African Republic, and Red Cross officials fear they will find more bodies today, reports Reuter.

The Central African Republic said it pulled its workers out of combat zones in the capital Bangui on Sunday afternoon, and the commander of French troops in the city said his men had stepped in to defend the African peacekeepers.

"As part of support for the African force, French forces in Bangui became involved as part of self-defence to prevent firing at Senegalese and Chadian positions," General Jean-Pierre Perez told France's La Chaîne Info Television.

Perez said the Central African ex-mutineers had started firing mortars at Chadian and Senegalese peacekeepers on Sunday afternoon after a lull earlier in the day.

He did not say how many French troops were involved in the action in the former colony nor whether there were any casualties.

Some reports in Bangui spoke of a French soldier being among the injured and witnesses said French helicopters were flying over the city. French officials in Paris could not confirm this.

Around 70 people have been wounded in the fighting, including five French nationals who were hit on Saturday by two stary mortar bombs that fell on the French embassy compound.

The African peacekeeping force has been deployed in Bangui since a January 25 peace deal that ended a series of troop mutinies.

That deal, brokered by Mali's respected former military leader Amadou Toumani Touré,

G-7 praises Indo-Pak talks

by Aziz Haniffa writes from Washington

The Group of Seven (G-7) comprising the world's richest nations, joined also by Russia, has applauded the India-Pakistan talks to end years of bitter hostility.

"We welcome the emerging high-level dialogue between India and Pakistan," the leaders of the United States, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, along with Russia, declared in the final communiqué issued at the end of the three-day G-7 summit in Denver, Colorado.

In Washington a Clinton administration official told IANS: "We are quite pleased the way the India-Pakistan dialogue is coming along, and as we have said repeatedly, we strongly support this dialogue and will encourage it in any way we can."

"But we don't see a direct role in these talks," he emphasized.

The G-7 communiqué however called on New Delhi and Islamabad to "bring their activities into conformity with international non-proliferation norms." It also asked them to "adhere" to the CTBT (Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty) to ensure its early entry into force.

Meanwhile, U.S. President Bill Clinton at the Colorado summit, dubbed the Summit of the Eight because of Moscow's participation, refused to comment on a Time magazine report that the White House and State Department had ignored a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) report that China helped Pakistan build a factory to make medium-range ballistic

missiles.

But he declared that when clandestine transfers like that of Beijing's sale of ring magnets to Pakistan took place, Washington had taken appropriate action.

"When we had clear evidence that China was providing ring magnets, (to Pakistan) we dealt with that and were satisfied," by Chinese assurances that no sales will take place in the future and Beijing would abide by the guidelines of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).

Clinton, asserting that "we will not walk away from these," said the U.S. would take strong action whenever nonproliferation objectives were violated. — India Abroad News Service

Israel plans to close its borders to PLO officials

MORAG, Gaza Strip, June 23: A deaf Palestinian boy was shot in the head by an Israeli soldier outside a Jewish settlement in Gaza, Palestinian official said Sunday, reports AP.

Mohammed Ibrahim Abu Singer, 14, was hospitalised in serious condition. He was walking outside the Morag settlement's perimeter fence when he was shot, said Abed Alrazek Magudia, head of the Palestinian police in Gaza.

The area has been the site of a sit-in to protest land confiscations for the past month, but Magudia insisted "there were no clashes and no warning from the Israelis when they shot at him."

The army said it was investigating the shooting, which comes after eight days of tension and riots in Morag and the West Bank City of Hebron. Reacting to the violence, Israel is considering closing its borders to about 20 Palestinian officials it blames for inciting eight days of riots in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Israel radio said Sunday.

The report said the Palestinian officials included three

legislators and Justice Minister Fehi Abu-Medini, who has called for imposing the death penalty on Palestinians who sold land to Israelis.

Government officials refused to confirm that Israel was considering such measures, but they insisted that the Jewish state had the right to deny entry to Palestinians who provoke violence.

Earlier this month, Israel revoked the entry permit of Palestinian intelligence officer Col Tawfik Tirawi. News reports had said Tirawi was behind slayings of three land dealers and the attempted kidnapping of a fourth.

Land is at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. The Palestinians oppose anything that might erode their claims to lands of the West Bank, Gaza and parts of Jerusalem for what they hope will be an independent state.

Israel has accused Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority of instigating riots in the West Bank city of Hebron and outside the Jewish settlement of Morag in the Gaza Strip.

In Hebron on Saturday, 14

Palestinians were wounded in stone-throwing clashes with Israeli soldiers who responded with rubber bullets and stun grenades. The protests also spread to the West Bank city of Nablus on Saturday.

On Sunday in the autonomous Palestinian community of Ramallah, Palestinian police fired into the air to disperse dozens of Palestinians throwing stones and bottles outside a courthouse to protest the detention and trial of nine men accused of killing collaborators with Israel.

There were no casualties. Police arrested 10 participants in the riot.

Abdul Karim Hamad, attorney for the nine, said they confessed to the murders of seven people after being tortured. In the first trial session two months ago, the court ruled the confessions inadmissible after Hamad produced hospital documents verifying his claims of torture.

The riot seemed to reflect growing dissatisfaction among Palestinians with the Palestinian Authority over corruption charges.

BRIEFLY

China, ROK to hold border talks: China and South Korea will hold talks on defining boundaries between their two countries' economic zones in the Yellow Sea, the Foreign Ministry said Monday, AP reports from Seoul.

The talks to begin Wednesday in Beijing, follow the ratification of the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas, which gives countries exclusive rights over fish and other marine resources within 200 nautical miles of their shores.

DPRK army man defects to ROK: A North Korean army private swam across a river inside the demilitarised zone Monday and defected to South Korea, the Defence Ministry said, AP reports from Seoul.

Fvt. Kim Hak Su, 22, was spotted by South Korean soldiers guarding the western sector of the border shortly after 9 am (0000 GMT) it said. He was the first North Korean soldier to defect across the border this year. Several North Korean civilians fled across the border earlier this year. Kim was being questioned, the ministry said.

Fujishiro wins mayoral polls in Japan: An independent candidate backed by the ruling Liberal Democratic Party won a mayoral election in an eastern Tokyo suburb Sunday, defeating the incumbent seeking a fifth term, according to official results released Monday, AP reports from Tokyo.

Koshichi Fujishiro, 54, ran on a ticket promising to limit mayor of Funabashi to three terms of four years each.

Malaysia to check dengue outbreak: Malaysian health authorities on Monday ordered strict checks to prevent an outbreak of dengue fever following a big jump in the number of cases, AP reports from Kuala Lumpur.

For the first half of 1997, the number of cases of dengue fever soared to 7,912 with 22 deaths, compared to 3,522 cases and 13 deaths for all of last year, the Health Ministry said.

Explosion kills 1 in Philippines: An explosion at a Petron Corp. oil refinery killed one person and forced a reduction in gasoline production by the Philippines' largest oil company, a company official said Monday, AP reports from Manila.

The accident, however, is not likely to cause a shortage in supplies of gasoline, diesel, liquefied petroleum gas and other fuel products because the company has backup stocks, company spokeswoman Malou Erni said.

1 killed as 2 plans collide in US: Two small airplanes competing in a race collided in flight and crashed in flames during an air show on Long Island, killing one of the pilots and critically injuring the other, AP reports from Westhampton, NY.

The single-engine planes, two of four circling a race course Sunday at the Wings Over Long Island show, crashed away from spectators at Francis Gabreski Airport, said Suffolk County Police Officer Jack O'Connor. "The wing of one plane clipped another," said Tim Ryan a spokesman for the Suffolk County Executive Robert Gaffney. The cause was under investigation, although witnesses said winds had picked up just before the crash.

Testing of killer ant vaccine soon: Australia's jack jumper ants may not be as widely feared as its sharks, poisonous spiders or snakes — but until now they have been just as deadly, AP reports from Hobart, Australia.

Researchers will soon test a vaccine to overcome the jack jumper sting and believe their work could also benefit those suffering cancer and heart disease. The jack jumper, an aggressive form of bull ant, can leap 4 inches (10 cm) to inject a sting causing heart failure, respiratory collapse and often death in people allergic to the venom.



Belgian Ambassador to NATO Jean de Ruyt (2nd R) opens the session of 14th International NATO Workshop on Political-Military Decision Making in Prague as Supreme Allied Commander for Europe General George Joulwan (L) of the US, Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski (2nd L) and his Czech counterpart Vaclav Havel look on Sunday. — AFP/UNB photo

Earth Summit + 5 reviews progress since Rio

UNITED NATIONS, June 23: Low on water, high on carbon dioxide and growing less green by the day, the world stops and asks itself a question Monday: Are we better off now than five years ago?

The official answers being debated at this week's UN Earth Summit are not encouraging — a choice between "worse" and "not much better," reports AP.

Leaders and envoys from more than 170 nations are gathering for the five-day conference, to review progress since the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

Many hoped the United States, the world's No. 1 polluter, would take the lead in setting clean-up goals, particularly on the tough issue of global warming. But it was Germany's Helmut Kohl who promised an action plan for "Earth Summit Plus 5."

The German chancellor was joining with Brazil, South Africa and Singapore to draft a joint plan for adoption by the UN session "to achieve concrete progress on key issues." The centerpiece was understood to be a proposal for a new World Environment Organisation.

Kohl, Japan's Ryutaro Hashimoto, Britain's Tony Blair and France's Jacques Chirac, all fresh from the Denver summit with President Bill Clinton, topped Monday's lineup of UN speakers, leading off a weeklong marathon of five-minute addresses. Clinton speaks Thursday.

Those coming from Denver can act as "catalysts" in unblocking negotiating logjams over the documents to be approved here, said the UN General Assembly president and summit chairman, Razali Ismail.

I hope the political leaders will come to the rescue," the Malaysian diplomat said.

In 1992 in Rio, governments endorsed the goal of "Sustainable development" — developing the global economy to benefit all while protecting the environment.

That summit was historic, but the steps it agreed on were mostly voluntary — in reducing such "greenhouse gases" as carbon dioxide, for example, to combat global warming, and in better preserving forests.

The record since then is spurring calls for tougher, mandatory actions.

Carbon emissions have actually increased — in the United States by more than 13 per cent. Fresh water is increasingly scarce. Forest is being lost at a yearly rate of 55,000 square miles (142,000 square kilometers) — about the size of Greece.

On the development side, the number of "absolute" poor — people living on less than \$1 a day — has edged above 1.1 billion.

In closed-door, pre-summit talks, diplomats debated what conclusion to reach in the political statement that will end the summit: Is the environmental outlook "worse" than five years ago, or "not much better?"

Such duels over language were the easy part. The harder negotiations were expected to drag on through the week over global warming and other more concrete issues.

Governments agreed two years ago to produce by late 1997 a new treaty on global warming requiring industrial nations to cut back greenhouse gas emissions. The European Union and others propose specific targets and timetables for endorsement by this week's

summit. But Washington is hesitating.

A US Senate majority says it will block any treaty that does not also mandate reductions by China and other developing countries. The Clinton administration is searching for a middle ground. Meanwhile, the rhetoric is sharpening.

"We would like to see countries that are benefiting from putting garbage into the air to something about it," said Laurence N. Edwards, UN ambassador of the low-lying Pacific nation of Marshall Islands, which might be inundated by rising sea levels predicted in the next century with global warming.

Edwards and others hope Clinton will take a firmer stand in his summit speech Thursday. But US officials, speaking privately, say the stalemate will continue.