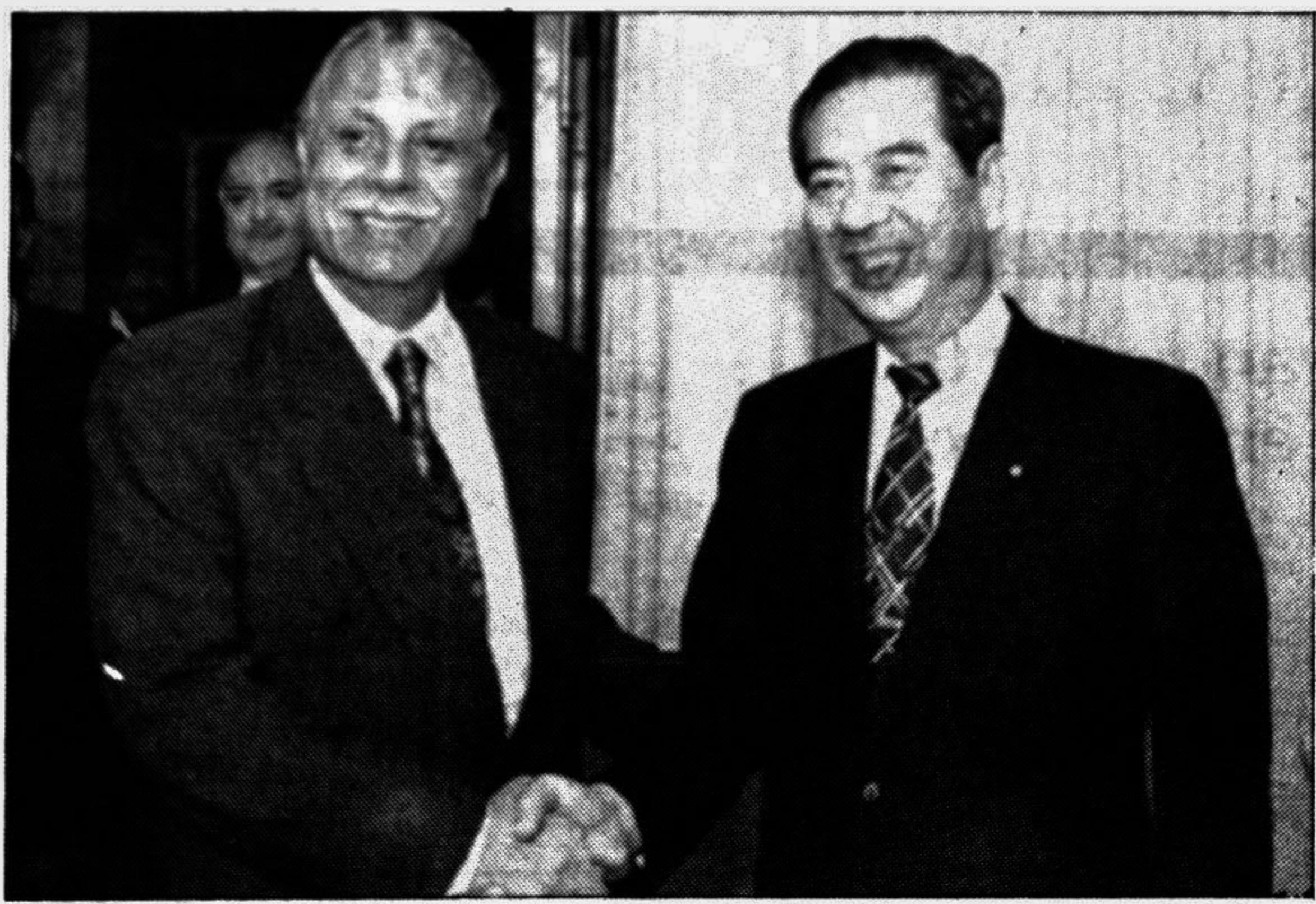


International



Pakistani Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub (L) receives his Japanese counterpart Yukihiko Ikeda at Islamabad international airport lounge, Monday. Ikeda, who is to travel to New Delhi from Islamabad on Wednesday, is expected to try to persuade Pakistani and Indian government leaders to review their objections to signing Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). — AFP/UNB photo

AICC session : Mamata calls parallel programme

CALCUTTA, July 22: The rebel Congress MP, Mamata Banerjee, yesterday challenged the party high command by announcing a parallel programme on August 9, during the AICC plenary session here and dared them to expel her, reports PTI.

Banerjee, who stopped short of announcing the formation of a new party, said that the "final" would be on August 9. The restive crowd cheered her when she said this at a rally here organised in memory of the 13 Youth Congress workers killed in police firing on this day in 1993.

Giving a broad hint that they might float a new outfit, Pankaj Banerjee, MLA and her close associate, said that they would file tickets and symbols to the 65,000 candidates in next year's Panchayet election.

Training guns at the high

command and especially CWC member, Pranab Mukherjee, she alleged that they had made a deal with the CPI-M to capture power at the centre.

WBPCC, meanwhile, demanded that AICC take an early decision on Mamata who repeatedly attacked them.

WBPCC sources further said that she was damaging the party by attacking the leadership in public meetings. Since the WBPCC could not take any step against her as she was an MP, AICC should not make any delay in taking a decision in this regard.

Banerjee alleged that Mukherjee advised the AICC chief, Sitaram Kesri to make friends with the CPI-M for power at the centre. "Mukherjee wants to be the vice-president of India while Kesri wants to become prime minister. I know

their politics and what they are up to."

A number of leaders including Sudip Bandopadhyay, Pankaj Banerjee and Sadhan Pandey wondered how Mukherjee, who has "no following," decided the policies of the Congress.

Bandopadhyay also charged Mukherjee with scuttling the efforts of the high command to make a rapprochement between the two warring factions of the party.

Mukherjee, WBPCC President, Somen Mitra and Dasgupta had joined hands to isolate and corner Mamata in the party, he charged.

Announcing the parallel

programme during the AICC plenary, Banerjee, who just remained a primary member of Congress, said that she would prove who were the real Congress on August 9.

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