

## Pol Pot confesses guilt, pleads for mercy

HONG KONG, July 31: Former Khmer Rouge supremo Pol Pot, held responsible for up to two million Cambodians' deaths, confessed before his show trial, burst into tears and pleaded for mercy, a senior guerrilla commander was quoted today as saying, reports AFP.

Pol Pot, the man behind Cambodia's "killing fields" in the mid-1970s, acknowledged his guilt and begged for his life, said General Im Nguon.

"Pol Pot did himself confess to me clearly, after his arrest," Im Nguon was quoted as saying in the Far Eastern Economic Review.

"When I met him the first time, he embraced me and burst into tears and said: It is the right thing comrade that this has happened."

## Massood hopeful of having control of Kabul soon

GULBAHAR, Afghanistan, July 31: At his headquarters north of Afghanistan's beleaguered capital, opposition leader Ahmed Shah Massood predicted Wednesday that his soldiers would wrest control of Kabul from its Taliban rulers within one week, reports AP.

"If the situation continues as it is.... they (Taliban) can't last more than one week," Massood said in an Associated Press Television interview some 60 kilometres (36 miles) north of Kabul.

In barely two weeks Massood's troops have punched through successive Taliban defences and now are on the doorstep of Kabul, barely 15 kilometres (9 miles) from the northern suburb of Kharakhan.

The Taliban army has called its substantial territorial losses

in the last two weeks "tactical retreats".

Massood's advance on Kabul, however, appeared to stall last Thursday and since then there has been no significant gains or losses on either side of the conflict.

Occasionally opposition rockets hit Kabul's combined military and civilian airport and the city's 1 million people wait and wonder whether there will be an all out assault on the capital.

Massood said he didn't want to attack Kabul and offered to negotiate a peace settlement with his Taliban enemies. But first the Taliban have to evacuate Kabul, he said.

The opposition coalition battling the Taliban religious army on several fronts is demanding Kabul be demilitarised.

JERUSALEM, July 31: Israel blockaded Gaza and the autonomous West Bank towns after a twin suicide bombing by Islamic militants killed at least 15 people and wounded more than 150. The attack dealt the hobbled Israeli-Palestinian peace process a devastating blow, reports AP.

Throughout the Palestinian areas, leaders of the Islamic militant Hamas movement decided on "A series of security measures against the Palestinian terror organisations," but would not elaborate.

A leaflet claiming to be from Hamas took responsibility for

the attack.

In Jerusalem, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Cabinet decided to suspend peace talks with the Palestinians — which had only this week resumed after a four-month crisis — until Arafat crushes the militants.

Netanyahu spokesman Shai Bazak said the government decided on "A series of security measures against the Palestinian terror organisations," but would not elaborate.

One senior Israeli official, who spoke on condition of

anonymity, said the options included commando strikes or limited military incursions into Palestinian-controlled areas.

For now the attackers — whose overall aim has been to scuttle the peace process — achieved a short-term goal: US President Bill Clinton postponed a new initiative by envoy Dennis Ross, who was to arrive in the region Thursday. No new date for the trip was set.

Reports said the two bombers apparently drove to the Mahane Yehuda market together in black coats with

white shirts and ties — perhaps in an effort to look like ultra-Orthodox Jews.

Each carried a briefcase packed with 10 kilograms (22 pounds) of explosives, police said. They set them off some 50 metres (yards) apart at 1:15 pm.

"People flew in the air without legs, without arms, without clothes," said Sarah Yamin, 43, her turquoise makeup streaking her cheeks.

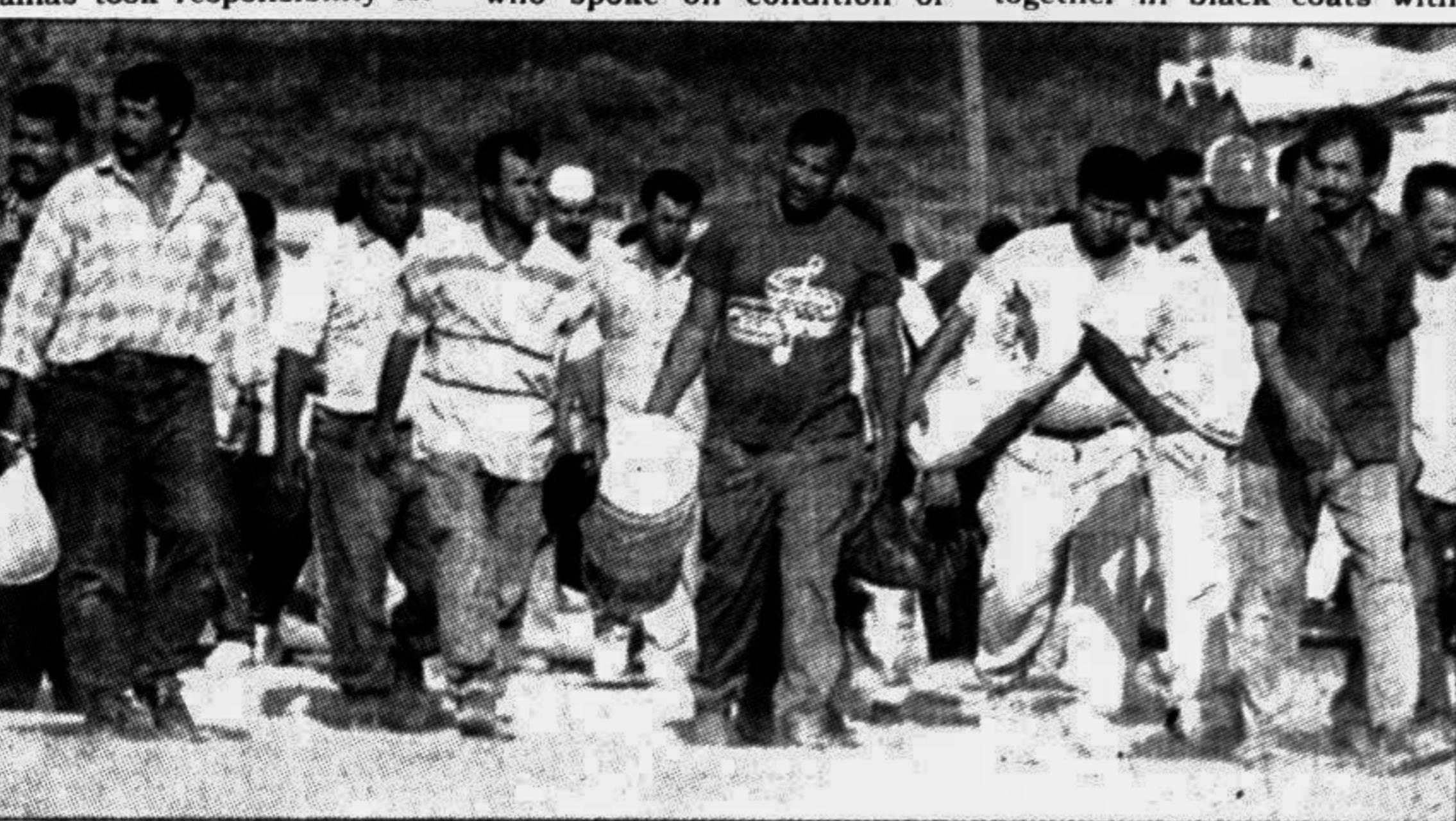
Soot-covered bodies lay on the ground, their blood mixing with smashed watermelons, torn clothes and shredded newspaper on the gray asphalt. Green awnings covering the alley were torn apart and vegetable stands and clothing displays overturned, scraps of clothing hanging from telephone lines.

Dozens of Israelis gathered near the site of the attack shouting, "What kind of peace is this? Who needs this peace?"

Dozens of ambulances lined up along Jaffa Road, one of Jerusalem's busiest streets, to carry away the dead and injured. A 14-year-old boy was seen with a badly mangled leg. Half a corpse, ripped apart by the force of the blast, lay covered with a blanket, apparently one of the bombers.

Israeli TV said that beside the two suicide bombers, eight men and four women were killed. Authorities said early Thursday that one more civilian had died, bringing the toll to 15.

The market has been the site of a dozen bombings and attempted bombings since the 1960s, but the latest assault was the deadliest.



Palestinian workers cross border between Gaza Strip and Israel Wednesday, on their way home after Israeli authorities sealed the West Bank and Gaza Strip and ordered some 65,000 Palestinian labourers working in Israel to return home. The closure came after a double suicide bombing that killed 14 people, including two suicide bombers, in a Jerusalem marketplace, Wednesday. — AFP/UNB photo

## NATO official pledges all war crimes suspects will be caught

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina, July 31: Upping the pressure on war crimes suspects, NATO's secretary-general pledged Wednesday they all will be behind bars before the international community leaves Bosnia, reports AP.

The comments by Javier Solana were the latest in a series of warnings from international officials of a tough new approach to nabbing suspects. It started with raids against two Serb suspects by British soldiers on July 10.

One, Milan Kovacevic, was captured and pleaded innocent Wednesday to genocide charges before an international tribunal in The Hague, Netherlands. The second, Simo Driljaca, was killed resisting arrest.

There are 77 publicly indicted suspects, but an untold number have been indicted secretly, as well.

Solana refused to say specifically whether more raids were planned, but pledged: "Before the international community leaves Bosnia, the war

criminals will be where they should be — sitting in front of the tribunal."

The No. 1 suspect is Bosnian Serb wartime leader Radovan Karadzic. A close associate of Karadzic said in an interview with The Associated Press on Wednesday in Pale, the Serb headquarters just east of Sarajevo, that war crimes investigators were free to come and interview Karadzic.

The official, Momcilo Krajisnik, claimed such interviews would clear Karadzic and by extension, remove a presumption of collective Serb guilt.

Solana did not give a deadline for suspects to be sent to the tribunal, but the NATO-led peace mission is scheduled to end next summer. There has been talk about extending it, but no decision has been reached.

Western officials believe that leaving war crimes suspects like Karadzic loose after NATO leaves would destroy any chances for putting Bosnia back together.

"Until he does so, he is in blatant violation of the Dayton peace agreement," Shattuck said.

The officials are also putting pressure on neighbouring Yugoslavia and Croatia to hand over suspects.

British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook met with Croatia's president, Franjo Tudjman, on Wednesday and later said: "I want to make sure that those who have been charged, should they enter Croatia, or should they be in the Croat part of Bosnia-Herzegovina, are handed over for trial at The Hague."

"It is very important, if we are going to build reconciliation in Bosnia, that those who committed atrocities are brought to justice," Cook said.

Special US envoy for human rights John Shattuck visited the region last weekend, and demanded that Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic turn over war crimes suspects and help refugees return home.

Shattuck said: "The results, said Dr. John Glaspy, suggests that the typical American diet, with its high content of vegetable and animal fat, may increase the risk of breast cancer, and that fish oil can quickly change the risk."

Glaspy cautioned that the study does not prove that a diet rich in fish oil would prevent breast cancer. A larger, longer study would be required for that, he said.

The study is to be published next week in the Journal of the National Cancer Institutes.

## Fish oil lowers breast cancer risk

BOSTON, July 31: A group of American women who took fish oil capsules for just three months experienced changes in breast tissue that may lower their risk of breast cancer, researchers say, reports PTI.

In an experiment at UCLA's Jonsson Cancer Centre, 25 US women were put on a diet that mimics foods, including fish oil, eaten by Asian women who have a much lower rate of breast cancer than American women.

The results, said Dr. John Glaspy, suggests that the typical American diet, with its high content of vegetable and animal fat, may increase the risk of breast cancer, and that fish oil can quickly change the risk.

Glaspy cautioned that the study does not prove that a diet rich in fish oil would prevent breast cancer. A larger, longer study would be required for that, he said.

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## NASA astronomers find youngest galaxy

WASHINGTON, July 31: Astronomers have discovered the youngest and most distant galaxy in the universe some 13 billion light years from earth and with some of the brightest stars ever found, NASA said Wednesday, reports AFP.

The galaxy was created less than one billion years after the birth of the universe in the "big bang," one of two theories of how our solar system was produced.

Astronomers found the new galaxy by using both the Hubble Space Telescope and the Keck Telescopes in Mauna Kea, Hawaii. It is composed of bright knots of huge stars 10 times more brilliant than the milky way and among the brightest in the universe, astronomers said.

"We are fascinated to be witnessing the very early stages of the construction of what would well become a massive galaxy like our own milky way," said Garth Illingworth of the University of California, Santa Cruz.

This object is a Pathfinder for deciphering what is happening in young galaxies and offers a rare glimpse of the powerful events that transpired during the formation of galaxies, Illingworth said.

The National Space and Aeronautics Administration (NASA) said in a communiqué that the galaxy was so far away from earth it might have remained invisible even to the powerful Hubble and Keck Telescopes.

But because of a rare alignment of the galaxy in the foreground of a cluster of massive galaxies some five billion light years from earth.

Astronomers got a view magnified up to 10 times higher than that provided by the Hubble Telescope alone, NASA said.

The remoteness of the

galaxy was confirmed with observations made by the Twin Keck Telescopes in Hawaii.

"Based on this image we can begin to make some conclusions about the early growth of galaxies," said Illingworth, "the knots show that starbirth happens in very tiny regions compared with the size of the final galaxy."

## 20 feared dead as landslide hits Australia

THREDBO, Australia, July 31: The desperate voices of victims trapped in a landslide began to fade Thursday while frustrated rescuers, unable to move their equipment in, could only look on, reports AP.

The landslide struck at 11:40 pm Wednesday and smashed through two ski lodges, burying 20 people under tons of rubble. Ten hours later, crushed cars were perched precariously on teetering piles of rubble.

The situation is extremely dangerous up there. We've got a lot of rescue personnel at the scene but it's so unstable that it is not possible for us to put people right down in there," Police Superintendent Charlie Sanderson said.

He expected many deaths at Thredbo, a popular resort in New South Wales about 185 miles (300 kms) south of Sydney. Thredbo Village has a winter population of about 2,000.

The New South Wales government rushed thermal body-imaging and earth-moving equipment to the site. A geophysicist was being flown in by helicopter to advise rescue teams on how to operate safely.

## Pakistan denies report on power deal with India

Nisar Ali Khan also said it was yet to be determined whether in the next two years Pakistan would have surplus power for exporting.

Apart from that there are lots of other things which Pakistan has to determine first like the price of such exportable power and the quantity before making any formal offer to sell power to a third country, he said.

## Pak PM begins Malaysia tour

ISLAMABAD, July 31: Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif left here this morning on a four-day state visit to Malaysia at the invitation of his Malaysian counterpart Mahathir Mohamad, reports Xinhua.

Accompanied by a 75-member delegation comprising senior government officials and businessmen, Sharif will seek ways during the visit to strengthen defence, commercial and economic relations between the two countries, official sources said.

## Court prohibits foreign universities from operating in India

NEW DELHI, July 31: An Indian court has prohibited foreign universities from conducting classes, collecting fees and awarding degrees in India, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported today, reports AFP.

The High Court in the southern city of Madras on Wednesday asked the Federal Government and University Grants Commission (UGC) not to permit foreign universities to operate in India directly or indirectly.

The government-run UGC funds Indian universities.

The court order followed a petition alleging that foreign universities violated Indian laws by operating in the country through local institutions.

## Launch development efforts for 21st century, Jiang urges PLA

BEIJING, July 31: Chinese President Jiang Zemin called today on the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to launch a "full-scale" military development efforts for the 21st century, reported AFP.

He also urged the armed forces to be fully alert to changes in both the domestic and international situation, to strengthen their sense of responsibility and mission, and to "launch a full-scale military development effort."

The rally was held in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. Top military commanders from across the country, the entire Politburo Standing Committee attended the event.

"Fulfilling our great targets and undertakings related to safeguarding China's unity and

security, while at the same time promoting world peace and stability, requires us to build a powerful army and consolidate national defence," Jiang said.

He also urged the armed forces to be fully alert to changes in both the domestic and international situation, to strengthen their sense of responsibility and mission, and to "launch a full-scale military development effort."

The PLA has almost three million troops and China's military modernisation programme has already caused murmurs of concern among its Asian neighbours, despite Beijing's repeated assurances that its armed forces will only act in self-defence.

Investors who lost money in a financial scandal clapped from the balcony of the National Assembly chamber in San Salvador, El Salvador, Wednesday. Dozens of protesters showed up at the session of the one-chamber congress to hear arguments on freezing assets of those implicated in the fraud.

— AFP/UNB photo

## Fate of thousands of Asians hangs in the balance in US

Ela Dutt writes from Washington

Hundreds of thousands of Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis may never get legal status in the United States if a three year old law is not extended.

Anecdotal reports of a spurt in marriages to American citizens are rife as frantic illegals try to make themselves legal before the October 1 deadline.

According to the US Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS), there are five million illegal immigrants in the country as of October 1996. Of them 33,000 are Indians and 41,000 Pakistanis. The fate of many of them hangs in the balance if Congress does not extend the three year experiment. Observers and experts believe it will not extend the law that allowed illegals to change their status by simply paying a penalty.

Three years ago the INS began a three-year experimental programme (Section 245 (i)) of the Immigration and Naturalisation Act) by which all those who were illegal could apply for citizenship by just paying a penalty of 1,000 dollars instead of going back to their country and approaching the US con-

sequently.

"The lines at marriage bureaus are lengthening," said Ms. Margaret Champagne, an immigration lawyer of twenty years standing in Washington. "So what happens — everybody is going to stay here illegally for the rest of their lives.... until another amnesty," she added.

But Jack Martin, of the conservative Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), said the three-year experiment "encourages" illegal aliens to pay the 1,000 dollars and become legal. FAIR was opposed to Section 245 (i), he said, when it was first adopted because it undermined laws adopted last year which were intended to deter illegal immigrants by setting the three-year and ten-year bans.

"There should be a zero-level or tolerance for illegal immigrants," said Martin who was once a consular official abroad. "We are not concerned with the inconvenience caused," he emphasized. "We want the experiment to end." He noted that there had been concern in immigrant circles about those who are just about to get their citizenship. "They don't know

which way to jump right now."

Those whose citizenship is about to come through may decide to stay back in which case they would be illegal during their stay and if they left they would not be able to come back for three years or more. "I've seen some anecdotal evidence on the spurt of marriages in the event the law ends," Martin said.

He indicated that it was too bad that the "good guys" got hurt with the "bad guys" but that the home country was the right place for clearing persons for U.S. citizenship. "I believe that the consular officers are the appropriate people to do the screening because often information not available here would be available in the home country that would disqualify someone from getting a visa," he said.

Bill Straussberger, a spokesperson for INS, told India Abroad News Service that the picture is not looking too favourable for an extension of the three-year programme. Since there was no provision under the law that allowed those who had applied for citizenship under Section 245 (i).