

# United Front won't support Congress to fight BJP in states in next polls: Yadav

BHUBANESWAR, Oct 1: The Janata Dal president, Sharad Yadav yesterday made it clear that the United Front in the next general elections would not join hands with the Congress to fight the BJP in states where the Saffron Party was strong, reports PTI.

Although the United Front government had accepted Congress support to prevent the communal forces from capturing power at the centre, the Front regarded both the Congress and BJP as enemies and viewed them at two sides of the same coin. Yadav told a news conference here at the end of his three-day visit to the state.

While fighting communal forces, which he alleged were endangering the unity and integrity of the country in the

# Opposition politicians will be allowed to return to Cambodia: Hun Sen

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 1: Cambodian leader Hun Sen said Tuesday he would let opposition politicians return to Cambodia and permit the United Nations to observe next year's election there, but hinted he may withdraw the offer if his government is denied a UN General Assembly seat, reports AP.

Hun Sen also refused to guarantee that his rival, the deposed co-prime minister, would be immune from prosecution if he returned. Prince Norodom Ranariddh was ousted last July in a bloody coup.

Both Hun Sen and Ranariddh met separately with Secretary-General Kofi Annan to discuss the status of Cambodia's General Assembly seat. The UN credentials committee has delayed a decision on whether to accredit delegations loyal to Hun Sen or Ranariddh during the current General Assembly debate.

# 70 killed as LTTE launches counter-attack on troops

COLOMBO, Oct 1: Tamil Tiger rebels launched a fierce counter attack on government soldiers trying to capture a strategic town, and the military claimed Wednesday 70 combatants were killed, reports AP.

Nineteen soldiers and 51 guerrillas were killed during Tuesday's assault near the town of Puliyankulam, said Maj. Kumar Dewage, a military spokesman.

Soldiers found the bodies of 16 rebels, said Dewage. The other casualties were evacuated by the guerrillas.

The rebels attacked with mortars and small arms fire. "Troops retaliated effectively, causing heavy casualties among the terrorists," Dewage said in a statement.

The rebels announced over their clandestine radio that they seized the bodies of 13 soldiers but didn't mention their own casualties.

There could be no independent confirmation of casualty figures since the government does not allow journalists into the war zone.

Puliyankulam's 5,000 residents fled the town when government troops began their latest offensive four months ago.

The soldiers have been trying to capture a 70-kilometre (43 miles) highway through rebel-held territory that could provide overland access to the government-controlled northern Jaffna Peninsula. They have managed to clear one-fourth of the road link so far.

The peninsula is now accessible only by sea and air.

About 20,000 government troops have laid a siege on Puliyankulam, 235 kilometers (145 miles) north of Colombo, the Sri Lankan capital. But repeated rebel counterattacks have slowed their advance.

# BRIEFLY

**US forest fire under control:** A massive fire that destroyed 85 homes over three days in northern California was completely under control Tuesday, according to a spokesman for the state's firefighting agency, AFP reports from Los Angeles.

The spokesman said the fire destroyed about 2,400 hectares (5,930 acres) of forest. The spread of the blaze was helped by a drought that has been affecting California for several months. In August, another forest fire burnt for 11 days in a forest north of Los Angeles, destroying almost 7,300 hectares (18,000 acres).

**WW-II pilot dies in Japan:** Nobuo Fujita, a Japanese Navy pilot who dropped a bomb near an Oregon town during World War II, has died, a family member said Wednesday. He was 85, AP reports from Tokyo.

Fujita died Tuesday of lung cancer, Mina Yanaghashi, his granddaughter, said from his home in the city of Tsuchiura, northeast of Tokyo. Flying a small reconnaissance plane from a surfaced submarine off the US West coast in September 1942, Fujita dropped the bomb outside Brookings, Oregon, with the intention of starting a forest fire, Japanese media reported.

**Fresh E Timor talks begin at UN:** Indonesia and Portugal open a second round of talks at ambassadorial level Wednesday on the future of east Timor, UN Officials said. AP reports from United Nations.

The talks will include the special UN envoy for East Timor, Jamsheed Marker, and are expected to last a few days, the officials said on condition of anonymity. The first round of ambassadorial talks was held in August. Indonesia sent troops to the former Portuguese colony in 1975 after rival East Timorese groups began fighting after Portugal ended four centuries of colonial rule.

**Richardson meets Cuban FM:** In the highest contact between the two countries in several years, US Ambassador Bill Richardson met Tuesday with Cuban Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina. AP reports from United Nations.

The two discussed "several things including terrorism," a US official said. He would not elaborate, but Cuba has blamed the United States for a series of explosions in Havana tourist hotels this summer. Richardson agreed to meet Robaina in his capacity as president of the UN Security Council and not as a member of the Clinton Administration, the US official said.

# 'US needs to change entire approach to immigration system'

WASHINGTON, Oct 1: The United States needs to change its entire approach to immigration — right down to the oath foreigners must take to become American citizens, an advisory panel says, reports AP.

"It is time to look at immigration differently," said Shirley M. Hufstetler, chairwoman of the US Commission on Immigration Reform.

"Some fear that the diversity brought by immigration will undermine our nation. We think not," said Hufstetler, who was the first secretary of education.

The commission, during a five-year review, has recommended changes from tightening borders against illegal migrants to setting not just quotas, but also priorities for legal immigration designed to keep

families together and bring skilled workers into the country.

In its final report, released Tuesday, the panel advised Americans to do a better job at helping legal immigrants adjust.

"That means the cultivation of a shared commitment to the American values of liberty, democracy and equal opportunity," said Hufstetler.

Symbolically, the commission recommended a simplification of America's citizenship oath, which now uses such obscure words as "abjure" and "potentate" that can be difficult even for many native English-speakers to understand.

A revision of the oath suggested by commissioners would have new citizens swear that "my sole political fidelity and allegiance from this day forward is to the United States of America."

More tangibly, the commission said the Immigration and Naturalisation Service should be abolished and its duties split among other government agencies.

Under the proposal, the Justice Department would control the border and remove undocumented immigrants, the State Department would take over the citizenship process and other legal immigration privileges, and the Labour Department would regulate foreign workers.

# Cross border firing Rescuers look for more bodies in Kashmir

JAMMU, India, Oct 1: Rescuers began clearing debris in an Indian village Wednesday, looking for more victims of shells fired across the border by Pakistani forces in the disputed Himalayan territory of Kashmir, reports AP.

At least 18 civilians were killed and another 30 wounded in the Pakistani firing that started on Tuesday afternoon and ended after midnight. The shells fell on residential areas in the Indian border town of Kargil, said Col. Shrutu Kant, a defense ministry spokesman.

India and Pakistan blamed each other for starting the firing, which resulted in the worst peacetime civilian casualties. Such clashes are common along the border separating countries that have fought three wars since 1947.

State-owned Pakistan Television said the Indian soldiers fired 600 artillery shells into Pakistan, killing three people and injuring seven others.

On Wednesday, Indian rescuers looked for more bodies under the debris. Many civilian homes and some government buildings were damaged in the shelling on Kargil. Thousands of people fled the town in panic.

# Russian officials evacuate Chechen capital

MOSCOW, Oct 1: A convoy of Russian government officials evacuated the Chechen capital early Wednesday after Chechnya's vice president ordered them out in a dispute over airspace rights, reports AP.

The convoy of about 20 automobiles left the capital, Grozny, shortly after midnight Moscow time (0800 GMT). Russian news agencies reported.

It was not clear how many officials were in the convoy. The ITAR-Tass news agency said it was headed for the neighbouring republic of Ingushetia.

Vice President Vakha Arsanov had demanded that all Russian government officials leave the republic as of midnight Tuesday unless his delegation was provided an air corridor to fly from Grozny to a meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan.

The convoy departed several hours after an assassination attempt against one of Chechnya's most radical rebel commanders, Salman Raduyev. Raduyev's car exploded seconds after he entered it around 9 pm (0500 GMT) Tuesday evening outside a television station, the Interfax news agency reported. One bodyguard was killed and Raduyev was hospitalised in serious condition.

Interfax reported, citing an unidentified Interior Ministry official.

It was the fourth apparent assassination attempt against Raduyev this year.



Pope John Paul II meets Sister Nirmala, head of the Missionary Sisters of Charity on Tuesday, during an international religious congress at the Vatican. — AP/UNB photo

# 342 PKK men killed in one week in N-Iraq

ANKARA, Oct 1: Turkish army troops and their Iraqi Kurdish allies have killed 342 separatist Turkish Kurds in one week of military operations inside Iraqi territory, the state-run Anatolia news agency reported Tuesday, reports AP.

Since last week when the army incursion began, 342 PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) members have been killed in action in northern Iraq, a military official told the agency.

The official said the Turkish army had also gained control of

# Israeli PM on a collision course with Clinton admn

NEW YORK, Oct 1: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's defiance of a US demand that he suspend settlement construction puts him on a collision course with the Clinton administration. The standoff also threatens the newly revived Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, reports AP.

But if Netanyahu yielded to the American demand, Israel's expansion of Jewish housing on the West Bank and its construction of new Jewish homes in Arab neighborhoods could be halted indefinitely and possibly never resumed.

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright bases her call for a "time-out" on the view that peace talks are unlikely to get very far if Israel takes steps the Palestinian Authority considers provocative.

On the Palestinian side, Albright would like a halt in propaganda attacks on Israel and in attempts to generate anti-Israel resolutions at the United Nations, where she is attending meetings.

Israel and the Palestinian Authority agreed here Monday at Albright's behest to reopen negotiations after a six-month lapse. The first round is to be held in the region the week of Oct. 6, the second in Washington a week later.

It is in the second round the two sides are supposed to try to define a "time-out."

However, Albright and her senior Middle East adviser, Dennis Ross, already have begun defining what they have in mind. And it is more like an indefinite freeze on West Bank and Jerusalem construction than what a time-out normally means.

In sports jargon, a time-out is a chance to review strategy, to check a player's injury, to get a drink of water.

# Latest extract from biography Di's glamour hid her craving for someone

LONDON, Oct 1: Princess Diana's image of sophisticated glamour merely hid her craving for someone to cherish her — a need she finally fulfilled just weeks before her death with Dodi Al Fayed, according to the latest extract from her biography published today, reports AFP.

She told a friend shortly before she died last month: "I adore him (Dodi). I have never been so happy," according to author Andrew Morton's book about the Princess, for which he claims she was the source.

He wrote in the latest extract published in The Times: "unwanted as a baby, unloved as a wife, she simply desired a man she could rely on."

Morton also told of Diana's warm relationship with Tony Blair after he became British Prime Minister and her desire to tell her ex-husband Prince Charles that she wished him well with his longstanding lover Camilla Parker Bowles.

Buckingham Palace and opposition Tory MPs have condemned the publication so soon after the Princess' death of "Diana, her true story — in her own words," a new version of an earlier biography by Morton.

In the latest extracts, Morton said Diana may well have been attracted to Al-Fayed, who died in the same car crash that took the Princess' life, by the very same qualities which led her to fall in love with Prince Charles. These were an outside of "gentle charm and courtesy," yet "suffering and sensitivity" in his soul.

Previously, she had felt alone, scarred by a romantic life of "betrayal and disloyalty," unable to even invite a single man to a dinner party at her Kensington Palace home for fear of starting rumours, the extracts said.

With her two sons seeming at ease in Al-Fayed's company, the Princess gradually allowed herself to fall in love again, Morton claimed.

"She told friends that she felt that in Dodi, so warm, affectionate and endlessly attentive, she had at last found a man who appreciated her for herself and wanted nothing from her but her own happiness," he wrote.

The only thing she did not like was the way he showered her with presents, reminding her of the way her father had given her gifts, but had not been

# HK marks China's National Day with mixed feelings

HONG KONG, Oct 1: Hong Kong celebrated its part of the National Day as the motherland on Wednesday with a solemn flag-raising ceremony, to be followed later by parades and fireworks, reports AP.

The holiday meant two days off from work for Hong Kong, which didn't observe National Day officially before July 1, when its 156 years as a British colony came to an end.

Hong Kong's new leader Tung Chee-hwa stood at attention with the territory's other senior officials as a police band played the Chinese anthem and raised China's gold-starred red flag beside Hong Kong's famous harbor. China's senior official in the territory, Ma Yuzhen, also attended.

Tung made no remarks. The simple, early-morning ceremony was watched by a few hundred guests and flag-waving spectators.

Andy Ng, 43, a waiter, said he took his 11-year-old son to watch the ceremony to learn patriotism.

"I grew up learning Hong Kong flag was the Union Jack, and I resisted the Chinese flag before," said Ng. "I took my son here to learn how to love his country and his national flag."

Holding a small flag tightly in front of his chest, Ng said he was touched to see the flag flying. "I now can speak out loudly that I am Chinese," he said.

The government said it now plans to raise the Chinese flag every Wednesday in the same place, along a promenade beside the new convention center.

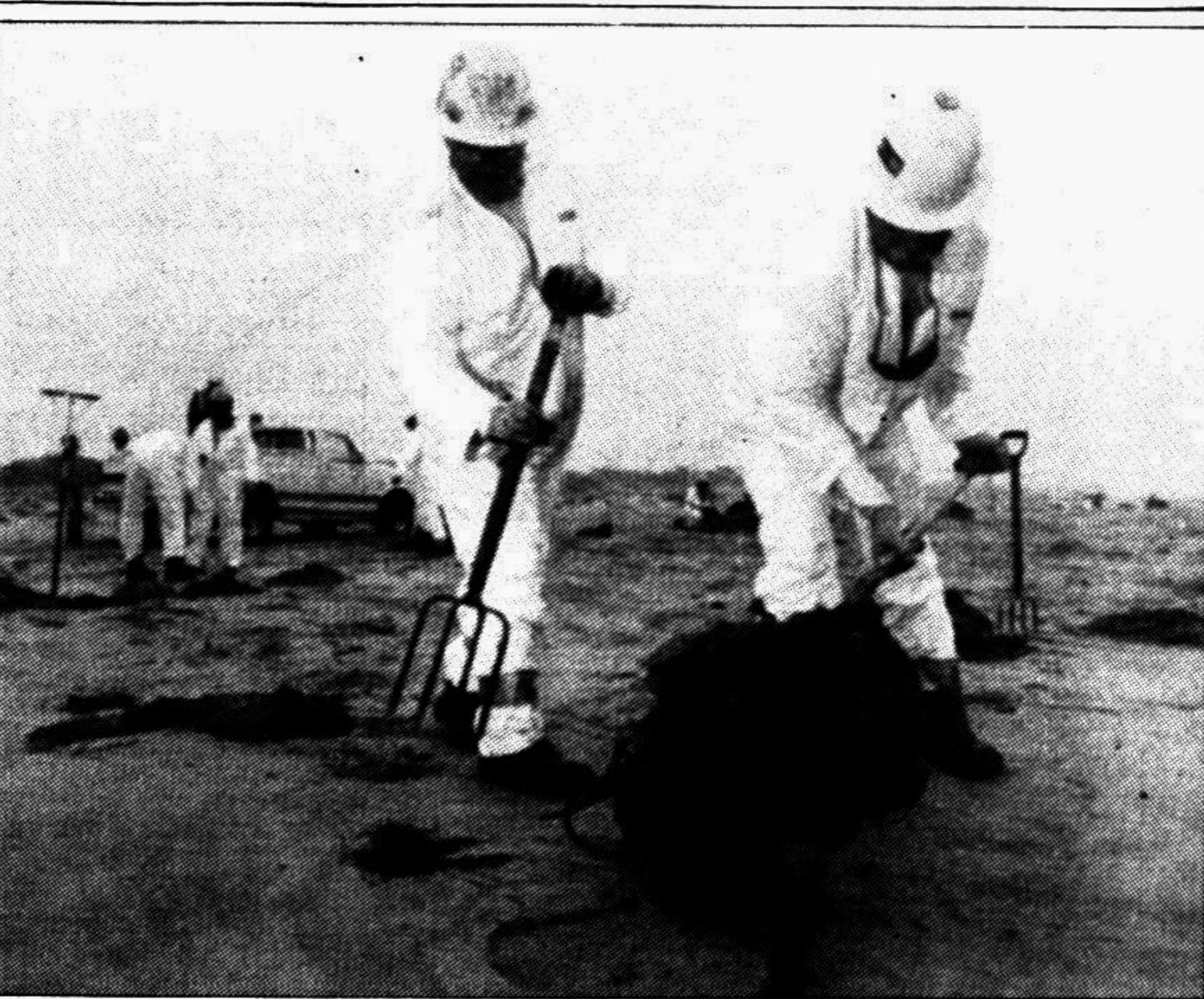
Under British rule, Hong Kong people were not schooled in such rituals of patriotism as flag-raising or anthem-singing, and some said they found the new holiday a bit strange — especially Tuesday night, though government officials said at least 20 people were believed to have died.

Bernard Koleas, the prime minister of the Republic of Congo, went to Kinshasa on Tuesday for emergency talks with Congolese officials.

Speaking to reporters at the Kinshasa airport, Koleas said that "there is absolutely not a war between the Republic of Congo," and Congo.

Congolese officials have blamed the shelling on former Zairian soldiers seeking revenge on the government of President Laurent Kabila, who overthrew Mobutu Sese Seko in May and renamed the country Congo.

The casualty toll from the two days of shelling was still



A Palestinian policeman at a Palestinian check point near the West Bank town of Nablus trains his rifle in the direction of the Israeli check point during a demonstration with some 200 Palestinians a Tuesday. Many of them women in long Islamic robes and head scarves, marched toward the Israeli army roadblock at the entrance to Assira to protest against the siege, but were held back by Palestinian police. Assira has been under Israeli military blockade for more than a week, with residents barred from leaving and entering.

— AP/UNB photo

# Clashes leave 20 dead in Kinshasa

KINSHASA, Congo, Oct 1: Mortar fire rocketed back and forth across the Congo River on Tuesday, while Kinshasa went into mourning for 20 people killed in shelling the day before, reports AP.

At least one person was killed and two more were badly wounded Tuesday after mortars were fired from Brazzaville, in the neighbouring Republic of Congo, official Congolese radio said. Later, mortar fire could later be seen being fired from Kinshasa toward Brazzaville.

The two cities, capitals of their respective countries, face one another across the Congo River.

The casualty toll from the two days of shelling was still