

# Cooperate with UN arms inspectors, Annan appeals to Iraqis

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 7: Apparently fearing a negative outcome to UN-Iraq talks in Baghdad, Secretary-General Kofi Annan made a last-ditch appeal Thursday for the Iraqis to cooperate with UN weapons inspectors and rescind an order for US inspectors to leave the country, reports AP.

Annan, who is travelling Chile, issued a statement through his staff, noting that the secretary-general sent the three-member diplomatic team to Baghdad "for the purpose seeking full compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and with previously agreed arrangements underpinning the work of UNSCOM."

"Should the Iraqi government not respond positively to the message carried by his team, the secretary-general would have no choice but to terminate the intervention initiated with the dispatch of the team and the matter would revert to the Security Council,"

the statement said.

The secretary-general would of course report to the Security Council on the concerns raised by Iraq with his team."

The statement was issued hours before the end of talks between the UN emissaries and the Iraqi leadership. The team hoped to receive a written response from President Saddam Hussein to a letter the envoys carried from Annan.

It appeared the statement was issued in anticipation of a negative outcome to the talks.

Annan appeared to be signalling Baghdad that without a positive response to his team, there is little the secretary-general can do but defer the matter to the council, including the Americans, British and other Iraqi critics.

Reuter adds: The United States insisted on Thursday that Iraq comply with UN resolutions on weapon inspections and again refused to rule out new economic sanctions or military action against Baghdad.

The Pentagon said it was keeping the Aircraft Carrier Nimitz at sea in the Gulf, postponing a scheduled port call in the United Arab Emirates this weekend.

At the State Department, spokesman James Rubin said a UN report that Iraq has moved sensitive equipment away from surveillance cameras could mean Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is missing the message Washington and its allies are sending.

But before deciding what to do, Washington will wait until a high-level UN mission to Baghdad reports back on its contacts with Iraqi leaders, US leaders said.

"He (Saddam Hussein) must know that he has to comply with the will of the international community... we will make sure that he complies," Vice President Al Gore told reporters.

"There is sufficient time to consider a whole panoply of responses that could be considered by the United Nations. They could include further economic measures. They could include military as well," said Defence Secretary William Cohen.

Pentagon spokesman Ken Bacon later said Marine Corps Gen. Anthony Zinni, head of the US Central Command, had decided to delay the port call by the Nimitz, which carries more than 50 attack planes, "in light of the current situation."

But Bacon declined to describe the move as a specific military warning to Iraq. "I don't think we are trying to send any signal to Saddam Hussein right now except that you ought to comply with the mandates," he added.

The United States has some evidence that Iraqi units, mainly ground forces, have dispersed in the last few days but this appeared to be a defensive measure, the spokesman added.

## Famine in DPRK: US pleased with its team report

WASHINGTON, Nov 7: The US State Department said on Thursday it was pleased with the results of the first trip by an American team to directly assess the famine in North Korea, reports Reuter.

"The team successfully completed its mission and we are pleased with the results. This trip improved our understanding of the food crisis in North Korea," spokesman James Rubin said.

He did not elaborate on this point, saying the State Department had only a preliminary report from the team and would await further details when the group returned to Washington.

Rubin described authorities of the isolated Stalinist regime as "cooperative" and said the US team had "useful discussions" with government officials on health, agriculture and foreign affairs.

"In brief, we believe this visit was a step forward in the process of assuring greater transparency, although more can be done," Rubin told a news briefing.

## Shakespeare's property deed to be auctioned

LONDON, Nov 7: To look at it could be any other dull legal document, reports AP.

But auctioneers Sotheby's said Thursday that a property deed it is selling on Dec. 11 once belonged to none other than William Shakespeare — and is one of the most important documents relating to his private life that survives outside a museum.

"Outside of a handful of institutionally-owned items, this document brings us as close to Shakespeare the man as will ever be possible," said Sotheby's expert Dr. Peter Beal.

The price? At least 250,000 pounds (£400,000), according to Sotheby's.

The deed relates to Shakespeare's purchase in 1602 of 107 acres (43 hectares) of land near his hometown, Stratford-upon-Avon. He paid 320 pounds, a lot of money in those days.

"At today's prices that is something like 150,000 pounds (£240,000) so this shows that Shakespeare was already very successful by this stage in his career," aged just 38, Beal said.

Sotheby's says only 13 documents exist which relate directly to the Bard's personal life — and the other 12 are owned by public institutions in Britain and America.

After Shakespeare's death in 1616, the deed remained in the hands of the Shakespeare family for 200 years. It was then bought by a 19th century Earl of Warwick, whose family collected important documents. Trustees of the estate of the current earl are selling the deed.

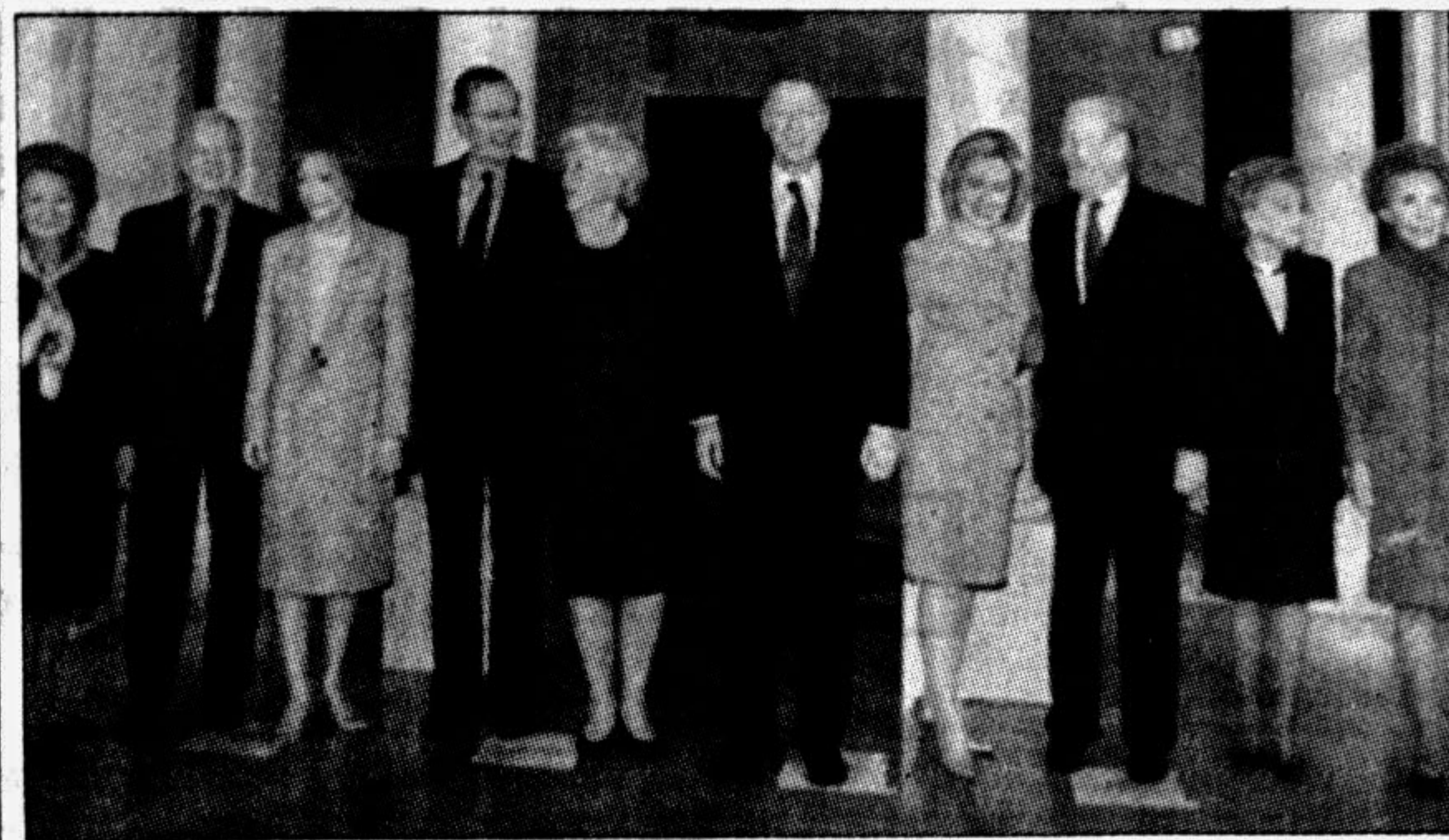
## Fergie won't dream of following in Di's footsteps

LONDON, Nov 7: The Duchess of York, gaffe-prone royal outcast from the House of Windsor, on Thursday said she would never dream of trying to follow in Princess Diana's footsteps as an icon of compassion, reports Reuter.

Dismissing claims that she was trying to win back public affection following her sister-in-law's death, she said: "I'm really not waving my flag."

The former Sarah Ferguson, familiarly known as Fergie, told The Mirror: "I would never dream or begin to presume that I could think of following in Diana's footsteps. She had her own brilliant, unique, compassionate style."

The Duchess said she would be delighted to help Diana's favourite charities "but only to support her name and her work."



Current and former occupants of the White House pose for a photo in front of a replica of the presidential residence at the George Bush Presidential Library in College Station, Texas, Thursday, prior to the library's dedication ceremonies. Shown, left to right, are: Lady Bird Johnson, former President Jimmy Carter, Rosalyn Carter, former President Bush, Barbara Bush, President Clinton, Hillary Rodham Clinton, former President Gerald Ford, Betty Ford and Nancy Reagan. — AP/UNB photo

## Troops kill 4,358 LTTE members since Aug '94

COLOMBO, Nov 7: Security forces have killed 4,358 members of the separatist Tamil Tiger guerrilla group since the ruling people's alliance government took office in August 1994, a state-run newspaper reported today, reports AP.

The Daily News quoted junior defence minister Anuruddha Ratwatte as saying that the highest losses among the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was between October and December of 1995 when 1,505 rebels were killed.

The period relates to the military's offensive to capture the northern peninsula of Jaffna which was the former citadel of the LTTE which is fighting for an independent homeland in the island's north-east.

The paper did not give the comparative casualties for the security forces.

Sri Lankan forces are currently leading their biggest ground offensive against the LTTE in a bid to open a key land route to the Jaffna Peninsula.

Troops have covered 46 kilometers (28.7 miles) out of their main objective of 75 kilometres (45 miles) to open a vital highway between the northern region of Vavuniya and Jaffna further to the north, the defence ministry has said.

The LTTE had mounted several major counter-attacks against the military in the past five months, inflicting heavy casualties on the security forces.

## Publisher settles lawsuit against Di's funeral album

PORTLAND, Oregon, Nov 7: An Oregon religious music publisher has settled a 10 million dollars copyright infringement lawsuit filed against the producers of the princess Diana funeral album, reports AP.

The settlement came just four days after Oregon Catholic Press filed the lawsuit in US District Court.

At issue was the "Prayer of St. Francis," which Diana's family said was her favourite hymn.

Oregon Catholic Press, a nonprofit religious corporation based in Portland, said it owns the copyright to the song and that it had been used without permission on "Diana, Princess of Wales: The BBC Recording of the Funeral Service."

The song, also known as "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace," was written by Sebastian Temple.

## Strike paralyses Karachi

KARACHI, Nov 7: Islamic religious students mourning the killings of their teachers shut down Pakistan southern port city of Karachi on Friday, reports AP.

Police in armoured personnel carriers and in bullet proof vests atop jeeps with machine guns pointed on to the streets patrolled. They were the only vehicles on the road.

Buses remained parked in huge compounds. Taxis refused to leave their stands. Shops were shuttered and most residents remained in doors.

The strike was called following the killings last Sunday of three Sunni Muslim clerics from the Benuri Mosque in Karachi's troubled eastern district.

Among the dead was Habibullah Mukhtar, the principal of the country's largest religious school which is attached to the mosque.

The school has Islamic students from around the world. At least half of the strict Taliban council ruling neighbouring Afghanistan are graduates of the Benuri Madrasha or religious school.

Students have been protesting almost daily since the massacre when a lone gunman on a motorcycle opened fire on the car carrying the four clerics. One survived.

Bullets pierced the gas tank setting the vehicle ablaze.

Police in Karachi say they have arrested two people in connection with the shooting, however clerics from the school say those who were arrested have no connection with the school and are being targeted by the government because of their connections with a minority ethnic group.

Maulana Mohammed Isfandyar said the Benuri School is giving the government until November 13 to arrest the culprit behind the shooting outside the school. Then they will hold another strike.

No one took responsibility for the killing but many of the students and teachers believe it was militant Shi'ite Muslims. Radicals from the rival Islamic sects often clash.

"If the killers are not arrested... we will soon call a countrywide strike and also lay

siege to the prime minister's house," Isfandyar said.

Karachi, home to 14 million people, is Pakistan's largest city and the commercial and manufacturing heart of the country. Strikes have become a regular means of protest by religious and ethnic groups in this troubled city.

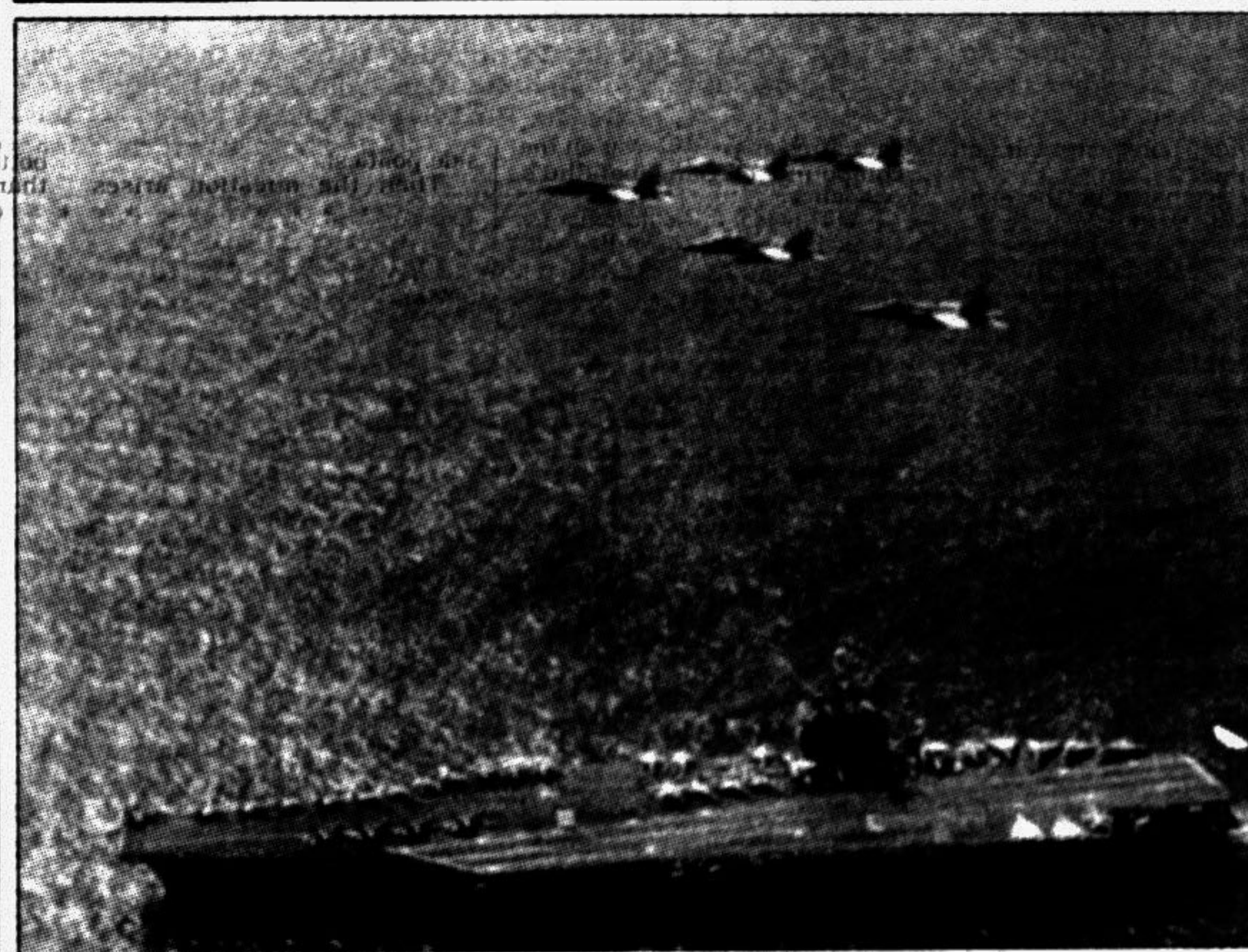
Roughly 70 per cent of the government's tax revenue is generated from Karachi and it's estimated a day-long strike costs the exchequer roughly one billion rupees.

Throughout the city students burned tires and raised slogans against the government.

But Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in a statement carried in several English-language newspapers decried the violence in Karachi.

"Enemies of the people and country are involved in terrorist activities in Karachi," the independent daily newspaper, The News, quoted Sharif as saying, although he didn't identify the enemies.

"Both the government and the nation have to fight them together," he said.



An F/A-18C leads four Kuwaiti F/A-18's in a fly-over of the USS Nimitz during Operation "Eager Archer 97" in the Persian Gulf Thursday. The carrier and aircraft are on a scheduled deployment to the Persian Gulf to help support UN sanctions against Iraq by enforcing the southern no-fly zone. Iraqi threats to shoot down surveillance planes and a standoff with UN Weapons inspectors have heightened tensions in the area. — AP/UNB photo

## Myanmar agrees to free 99 Thai convicts

BANGKOK, Nov 7: Myanmar has agreed to release 99 Thai convicts, following a visit by Thailand's army chief to the military state, a Thai military spokesman said today, reports AP.

Thai army commander General Chhettha Thanajaro discussed the releases with the Lieutenant-General Khin Nyunt, powerful First Secretary of Myanmar's ruling junta, during a one-day visit to Yangon on Thursday.

The Bangkok Post quoted

Chhettha as saying the 99 were prisoners at the notorious Insein prison in the Myanmar capital and would be released on Tuesday.

Thailand was also negotiating for the release of another 86 Thai inmates in Myanmar, the report said.

The release of the Thais was at the top of Chhettha's agenda during his visit, it which it was also agreed to open a new border crossing to facilitate a gas pipeline, the Post said.



British band Spice Girls pose at the presentation of the MTV Music Awards in Rotterdam Thursday. The Spice Girls won the Best Group category. — AP/UNB photo

## Iraq admits of moving equipment away from UN surveillance cameras

BAGHDAD, Nov 7: Insisting that it was only taking precautions against a possible US air strike, Iraq admitted that it had moved some equipment away from UN surveillance cameras, reports AP.

Weapons inspections were canceled for a fourth straight day Thursday after Iraqis refused to admit American members of the team to the sites.

The cancellation of inspections and the apparent failure of a UN delegation currently in Baghdad to make any headway in talks with Iraqi officials led late Thursday to a thinly veiled warning from a spokesman for UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

If the Iraqi government did not "respond positively" to the envoys' insistence that Baghdad comply with the UN Security Council's stance on inspections, Annan would have "no choice" but to withdraw the delegation and turn the matter over to the Security Council, spokesman Juan Carlos Brandt said.

Brandt made the statement in Santiago, Chile, where he was accompanying Annan on an official visit.

As the talks stalled, UN monitors on Thursday again accused Iraq of taking advantage of a halt in inspections to disable the cameras and hide key equipment. "It looks a little bit like, 'the cat's away, the mice will play,'" the chief UN weapons inspector, Richard Butler, said in New York.

In a carefully worded statement, the Security Council told Iraq to stop tampering with the UN surveillance arrangements. It said it "hopes that any recurrence" of those actions "will be avoided" as they were "not in conformity" with UN orders.

The inspections are meant to check whether Iraq has destroyed all long-range missiles and weapons of mass destruction, including poison gas and lethal biological toxins. That is the key requirement for lifting strict UN sanctions imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, touching off the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

In Washington, US Vice President Al Gore said Iraqi President Saddam Hussein "must know that he has to comply with the will of the international community."

"We will make sure that he complies," Gore said, without elaborating.

Iraq denied tampering with the cameras, saying one was damaged when a missile engine exploded during a test. The engine was for a short-range missile that is not banned under UN orders.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf said in a letter to the Security Council that Baghdad took the action only because it feared a US air strike was imminent.

"Therefore, we have taken some measures, which are precisely to move to distant sites

the equipment that may have been subject to military attack," he said.

He said the equipment would be returned to the original location and the United Nations would be allowed to inspect it once any threat of an air strike ends.

"We stress that this equipment will not be used for any proscribed military activity during this period," he said.

Butler said earlier the situation was "very serious" and that the Iraqis could use some of the equipment under surveillance to "produce seed stocks of biological warfare agent."

"They've turned the lights off and it's pretty hard to take pictures when you've got no lights," Butler told CNN. "In other places, they've simply obstructed the cameras, put bags over the lenses."

Aboard US President Bill Clinton's plane, White House spokesman Mike McCurry said Iraq's interference with security cameras "proves our concern about Saddam Hussein's unwillingness to comply with relevant Security Council resolutions is well-placed."

Defence Secretary William Cohen said a response "could include further economic measures."

"They could include military as well," he said. The Turkish daily Hurriyet quoted Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz as saying the United

States asked Turkey to allow the use of an airbase for possible air raids against Iraq. Turkey did not give an answer and is awaiting action by the Security Council, the newspaper reported.

If the Security Council were to declare Iraq in "material breach" of the cease-fire, it could pave the way for military action.

Butler had hoped to get his experts in Thursday to verify whether Iraq had been tampering with cameras at the sites and removing equipment.

But Iraq turned back three teams of inspectors, insisting again that Americans could not take part, said Alan Dacey, a spokesman for the UN weapons inspection programme.

UN officials did not say which sites were involved in the blocked inspections.

Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz lashed out at Butler, accusing him of trying to "mislead the Security Council and to escalate the situation with the aim of misleading international public opinion," Aziz's statement was carried by the official Iraqi News Agency.

The statement by Brandt, Annan's spokesman, followed the fourth meeting in Baghdad between Iraqi officials and three UN envoys sent by the UN chief to ease the crisis. The envoys postponed their departure until after a fifth session Friday.

## 5 killed in Srinagar gunbattle

SRINAGAR, Nov 7: A battle with rockets and machine guns in central Srinagar left five people dead, police said Friday, reports AP.

The fighting in the main city of India's restive Kashmir state broke out after a security force patrol came under machine-gun fire as it passed through a residential area Thursday night, according to PS Gill, the top police official in Kashmir. One soldier was killed, Gill said.

Security forces surrounded the house from where the shots had been fired. When another soldier was wounded Friday morning, troops fired rockets at the house, destroying it and a garage attached to a neighboring house, Gill said.

Four bodies were pulled from the rubble, and soldiers were searching for more. The dead were not immediately identified, but Gill said they were militants fighting for Kashmir independence.

Srinagar has been the centre of a separatist guerrilla war that has killed more than 16,000 people since 1989. Militants demand independence or incorporation into officially Islamic Pakistan for Kashmir the only majority Muslim state in predominantly Hindu India.

## BRIEFLY

**Thai King is in good health:** A panel of doctors at a Bangkok hospital said Friday that Thailand's King Bhumibol Adulyadej is in good health despite a history of heart trouble, AP reports from Bangkok.

A statement released by Siriraj Hospital said the king had been examined and treated for an irregular heartbeat, but his heart was functioning normally now and there was no blockage in his arteries. The king checked into Siriraj Hospital Thursday evening for the examination and was released 7:30 am Friday. He was accompanied by Queen Sirikit, Crown Princess Sirindhorn and Princess Chulabhorn. King Bhumibol is the world's longest reigning monarch with 50 years on Thailand's throne, and is genuinely revered by his subjects.

**No' to death penalty in US state:** A bill to reinstate the death penalty in Massachusetts failed in the state House of Representatives by a single vote changed because of the British air case, AP reports from Boston.

Rep John Slattery, a Democrat, said he switched his vote from "yes" to "no" Thursday after talking to constituents about Louise Woodward, the British air pair convicted last week of murder in the death of an infant in her care. She was sentenced to life imprisonment.

**US Senate okays new envoys:** In a flurry of end-of-session activity, the US Senate confirmed new ambassadors to Israel, Egypt, India and 21 other countries, AP reports from Washington.

Former Ohio Gov Richard Celeste, who served at the embassy in New Delhi from 1963 to 1967, was confirmed as ambassador to India. Celeste has also been director of the Peace Corps. He was Ohio's governor from 1981 to 1989. Israel's new ambassador is Edward S Walker, Jr, who has been ambassador to Egypt since 1994.

**Lawyers on strike in France:** French lawyers staged a strike Thursday protesting what they called a "weak and slow" justice system and demanding more resources, AP reports from Paris.

The daylong strike by many of the country's 35,000 lawyers idled cases across the country, including a symbolic half-hour suspension of the Maurice Papon war crimes trial in Bordeaux Thursday afternoon. Justice Minister Elisabeth Guigou said she backed an emergency plan to speed up the justice system, France Info radio reported, though the means were unclear.