# Kuwait opposes using force against Iraq

CAIRO, Nov 16: Kuwait's foreign minister said today his country opposed using force against Iraq in its latest confrontation with the United Na-

tions, reports Reuter. We have not supported any military action against Iraq. Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, who is also deputy prime minister, told reporters after meeting President Hosni Mubarak. "Any military attack would harm the Iraqi people and neighbours.

Meanwhile, Iraq and the United States launched rival diplomatic offensives on Saturday to seek support in the escalating crisis over Baghdad's expulsion of US arms inspec-

A spokesman for US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, in Switzerland for talks with Israeli and Palestinian leaders, said that in a change of plans. Albright would travel today to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain, as well as attend a long-planned Middle East economic conference in Doha.

"The reason for these stops is that those are the countries that are the frontline states," James Rubin told reporters.

Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz, in Paris on a "technical stopover" on his way back from the United Nations in New York, was meanwhile preparing his own tour of five Arab states in northern Africa to rally support for Baghdad, Foreign Minister Mohammed

Saeed al-Sahaf announced. Defence sources in Doha, Qatar, said Albright was expected to ask Gulf Arab allies for military facilities, possibly including the deployment of added ground forces in Kuwait, as the likelihood of a showdown with Iraq grows.

The Americans are asking some in the Gulf for added fa-

The Aegis class cruiser USS Normandy is underway in the eastern Mediterranean sea

Saturday, enroute to the Suez Canal. The Normandy is part of the aircraft carrier USS

George Washington battle group that was ordered on Friday by President Clinton to the

Persian Gulf, where the USS Nimitz is already patrolling. The Normandy is armed with

cilities," a Gulf military source told Reuters. "It is a show of force to display muscle to your enemy in hope he steps down."

US President Bill Clinton and British Prime Minister Tony Blair conferred by telephone on the showdown with raq on Saturday and agreed to emphasise the search of a diplomatic solution, a senior US official said.

AP adds: Framing the showdown with Iraq in horrific terms, President Clinton pressed Russian and French allies to join him in preventing Saddam Hussein's "forces of destruction" from creating a future where civilians are terrorised with poison gas and briefcase bombs.

"I say this not to frighten you." Clinton told Democratic donors at a Sacramento luncheon Saturday.

### International China frees dissident Wei Jingsheng

BEIJING, Nov 16: China's most prominent pro-democracy campaigner. Wei Jingsheng. was released from prison Sunday and left for the United States, his sister told Hong

Kong Cable TV, reports AP.
The release of Wei, who has spent all but about six months of the past 18 years in prison, came less than two weeks after Chinese President Jiang Zemin returned from a state visit to the United States.

Chinese officials had denied suggestions they would release Wei or other dissidents as a goodwill gesture, describing the prisoners as common criminais.

There was no immediate comment from the Chinese government.

Wei left aboard a flight to De-

troit, his sister Wei Shanshan said in the cable TV interview from her home in Germany.

Chinese leaders usually are happy to see dissidents go into exile, where they frequently sink into obscurity. But none has ever been as high-profile as Wei, who has been mentioned for years as a leading contender for the Nobel Peace prize.

Wei, 47, suffers from chronic high blood pressure and heart and stomach ailments as a legacy of his captivity.

Recently, he has been placed under 24-hour watch by fellow prisoners in a cell with one glass wall that made him feel like a zoo animal, according to the New York-based group Human Rights in China.

Human rights groups ap-pealed to US President Bill Clinton before Jiang's trip in late October to demand the release of Wei and other dissidents. Human Rights watch wel

comed Wei's release but cautioned it should not be seen as a sign of major improvements in Chinese human rights.

Wei was first arrested in March 1989 in the crackdown on the "Democracy Wall" prodemocracy movement.

NEW DELHI, Nov 16: US Sec-

retary of State Madeleine Al-

bright will discuss a wide range

of issues during her visit to In-

dia this week but will tiptoe

around the political minefield

of Kashmir, analysts say, re-

tary of State to visit India in 14

years, will focus on bilateral

trade, regional issues and an in-

ternational nuclear test ban

treaty, while ensuring she does

not get bogged down by contro-

versy over the disputed Hi-

Delhi on Tuesday from Pak-

istan and leave India for

New Delhi would discuss the

Albright will arrive in New

An official spokesman said

malayan state, they said.

Bangladesh the next day.

Albright, the first US Secre-

ports AFP.



US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, left, shakes hands with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, at the start of their bilateral talks at the US Ambassador's residence in - AP/UNB photo Berne, Switzerland, Saturday.

Albright to discuss wide range

### 'There will be no public statement on Kashmir'

#### Classmate claims 33-yr relationship with Clinton

LONDON, Nov 16: A woman who claims to have had a 33year relationship with President Clinton says he wanted it to continue when they last met again three years ago. The Times of London reported Saturday, reports AP.

Dolly Kyle Browning, 49, a high school classmate of Clinton was questioned last month by lawyers for Paula Jones, who is suing Clinton for sexual harassment.

Browning, who has written a tell-all novel about her alleged relationship with the president told The Times that she and Clinton talked a lot, corresponded, and sometimes had

"We had this attraction and have to think it was mutual. We talked a lot; we corresponded with each other," The Times quoted her as saying.

White House officials have routinely refused to comment on people involved in the Jones lawsuit.

of issues during India visit Kashmir issue with Albright but "did not want any third party" to be involved in solving the thorny issue with neigh-

bouring Pakistan. Bhabani Sengupta, policy advisor to Prime Minster Inder Kumar Gujral, predicted that Albright, whose visit will pave the way for a trip by President Bill Clinton next year, would publicly avoid the Kashmir

"There will be no public statement on Kashmir. She will discuss Kashmir with Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral in private," he said.

Sengupta said that India, a champion of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which looked to the Soviet Union for moral and military support

during the Cold War, and the United States were working towards building a new relationship after years of mutual sus-

"The new dialogue is very different," he said. "This is a comprehensive dialogue, covering the entire gamut of Indo-US relations.

India and Pakistan, both regarded as capable of building nuclear weapons, have fought two wars over the divided Kashmir since their independence in 1947.

Pakistan has lobbied the US and the United Nations to help conduct a referendum on the future of the Muslim-majority territory. India says the dispute should be solved bilaterally without outside intervention.

Sengupta said the US and Pakistan had traditionally enjoved close ties but now 'Washington is trying constructive engagement with as many countries as possible, including In-

The new approach, he said,

would mean a cautious approach on Kashmir, a viewborn out by recent US announcements that it would only offer to mediate if asked by both

US Under-Secretary of State Thomas Pickering, in New Delhi last month, has admitted there is "still a long way to go" to improve ties.

But he said it was time for both countries to get away from a "daily consideration of only the problems in our relations".

# BREFLY

vertically launched Tomahawk Cruise Missiles.

Bodies of Americans in US: The steel gray coffins carrying the bodies of four American oil company workers killed in Pakistan arrived in Delware on Sunday, AP reports from Dover.

The plane carrying the bodies landed at an air base in Dover about 1:30 am (630 GMT). A plane is scheduled to return the bodies of the Union Texas Petroleum workers to Houston on Monday, a spokeswoman for the company said. The bodies were loaded onto the charter flight from Pakistan Saturday after a brief ceremony at the airport.

Bolivia to expel Red Army leader: The government said Saturday it would deport a leader of Japan's Red Army linked to the 1977 hijacking of a Japan Airlines jet and a 1975 attack on the French embassy in the Hague, AP reports from La Paz.

Jun Nishikawa was arrested around midnight Thursday night in Santa Cruz, located 450 miles east of La Paz, on suspicion of possessing fake passports and illegally staying in the country. Interior minister Guido Nayar said Nishikawa will be turned over to Japanese officials. Nayar said the suspect frequently traveled to Peru on business and was arrested based on information provided by Peruvian police officials and In-

11 of a family killed in Algeria: Eleven to 13 members of the same family were slain Thursday in the latest massacre to be reported in Algeria, local press reports said Saturday. AFP reports from Algiers.

The dead included five women and five children, and the toll would have been higher if police and local militia had not intervened, the El-Khabar and Liberte newspapers reported. The bloodbath took place at Hammama, a neighbourhood on the outskirts of Miliana, 80 kilometres (50 miles) southwest of Algiers.

Charles' designer Lady Tryon dies: Lady Dale "Kanga" Tryon, clothes designer, socialite and confidante of Prince Charles, died Saturday of acute blood poisoning in a London hospital, a family friend said. She was 49, AP reports from London.

Alastair Mackillop said Lady Tryon developed septicemia after a skin graft a week ago. She had checked into the The London Clinic two weeks ago after returning to Britain from Australia, he said. News reports said Lady Tryon was having cosmetic surgery to repair bed sores sustained during a recent illness in Indian.

Malaysian king, queen visit Kuwait: The Malaysian king and queen left Sunday for Kuwait, where they will try to strengthen ties between the two nations, AP reports from Kuala Lumpur.

#### 20 die from liquor poisoning in Bombay

- AP/UNB photo

BOMBAY, Nov 16: A weekend drinking spree at an illegal bar in western India left 20 villagers dead of alcohol poisoning and another 20 seriously ill. doctors said Sunday ireports

The victims, all farm labourers from the rural district of Khalapur, 150 kilometres (90 miles) south of Bombay, began vomiting and going into convulsions after drinking homemade liquor Friday night. Seventeen died Saturday morning in Khalapur, and three died Sunday at hospitals in Bombay.

Dr Smita Chawla of Sion Hospital, one of three hospitals where 49 survivors were being cared for, said the liquor had been adulterated with poisonous methyl alcohol. She said 20 of those hospitalised were in serious condition.

NZ won't face snap polls soon

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand, Nov 16: New Zealand will not face a snap election after New Zealand First party leader Winston Peters said Sunday his party will stay in the coalition government, reports AP.

He announced the decision in a speech to his populist party's conference and made no mention of any changes to the coalition agreement with the dominant National Party.

"We are the only centre party and we stand between the extremities of the left and right .... there will be no breach of the coalition agreement and there will be a continuation of this government for the next two years," Peters said.

## NLD takes wait & see stance on military changes in Myanmar

Economic confce in Qatar opens

ME peace process in

danger, says Albright

YANGON. Nov 16: One of Myanmar's top opposition leaders acknowledged Sunday the country's new military regime has a friendlier name but reserved judgment on whether the leaders would change in their deeds, reports

On Saturday, four top generals announced they had dissolved the State Law and Order Restoration Council, or SLORC, set up eight years ago, and replaced it with the State Peace and Development Council.

"We hope there is a change of heart and thinking also, but it is too early to make a judg-

DOHA, Nov 16: US Secretary

of State Madeleine Albright

said Sunday the Mideast peace

process is in danger because

leaders of the region "have

failed to take the actions re-

quired to realise the possibili-

prepared for a Middle East eco-

nomic conference in the Per-

sian Gulf emirate of Qatar that

largely is being boycotted by

Arab nations as a protest

against Israeli Prime Minister

tion in Iraq. Albright said the

United States would remain

Commenting on the situa-

Albright spoke in remarks

ties of peace," reports AP.

Benjamin Netanyahu.

ment," said Tin Oo, vice chairman of the National League for Democracy, or NLD, the party of which Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi is also a top official.

Except for SLORC chairman Gen Than Shwe, vice-chairman Gen Maung Aye, Secretary-One Gen Khin Nyunt and Secretary-Two Gen Tin Oo, no relation to the democrat Tin Oo, the new ruling council is made up entirely of a new and younger generation of military officers.

The other members of the SLORC were given positions on a largely ceremonial advisory board.

unwavering in its determina-

tion to induce President Sad-

Security Council resolutions.

dam Hussein to comply with UN

Instead of fulfilling UN re-

Only six Arab countries be-

Other Arab nations are boy-

cotting in a demonstration of

hostility toward Netanyahu,

whom they blame for the im-

passe in the Arab-Israeli peace

quirements, she said, "Saddam

Hussein has lied, delayed, ob-

sides Qatar sent representatives

here: Tunisia, Jordan, Kuwait,

Oman, Mauritania and Yemen.

structed and tried to deceive."

#### long farewell to power JOHANNESBURG, Nov 16:

Mandela begins

President Nelson Mandela began his long farewell to power on Saturday when he met his party's National Executive Committee for the last time as

leader of South Africa's ruling

African National Congress

"President Mandela opened the meeting, which is the last NEC (National Executive Committee) meeting he will attend as president of the ANC," party spokesman Ronnie Mamoepa

told Reuters on Saturday. The two-day meeting at a private venue between Pretoria and Johannesburg focused on preparations for the December conference at which Mandela will formally hand over the party leadership to Deputy President Thabo Mbeki.

#### Mir crew restores power after blackout

SPACE CENTER, Houston, Nov 16: The Russian space station Mir lost power during a test of a newly-installed solar panel, but a NASA spokesman said energy was being restored and the crew was not in danger, reports AP.

The Friday afternoon blackout caused the station's motion control computer to shut down, spokesman Ed Campion said Saturday.

After a computer failure — Mir suffered a series of them over the summer — the station usually drifts aimlessly in or-

"I would not characterise it as a big deal," Campion said. "The Russians have had these kind of power failures before and they're very familiar with the way to recover from them."

#### Kalpana becomes India's 1st woman astronaut

KARNAL, India, Nov 16: Until recently the sleepy northern Indian town of Karnal had also claim to fame, as the birthplace of an invincible mythological warrior named Karna, reports

This week it will have two, when 36-year-old Kalpana Chawla becomes India's first woman astronaut by blasting off into space on Wednesday aboard the US space shuttle Columbia for 16 days in orbit.

Chawla, an expert in gravitational studies, will carry out experiments to study the impact of weightlessness on industrial materials and how metals solidify in zero-gravity condi-

into space was Rakesh Sharma. as part of a 1984 Russian mis-"Karnal is on top of the

The only other Indian to go

world," said Vimla Raĥeja, head of the Tagore Bal Niketan School, where she studied from kindergarten to high school. "She has put us on the world

She was always the girl with guts," Raheja said. "You can compare her to President Lincoln. His father was a woodcutter. Her father was a penniless refugee from Pakistan who could barely sign his name."

## Off the Record



Thais cook the world's biggest omelet during a fair to promote egg consumption in Chachoengsao province, 31 kilometres (20 miles) east of Bangkok, Saturday. Using 20,999 eggs, 1,100 cooks along with 499 assistants are hoping their monster meal will make it into the Guinness Book of World Records. - AP/UNB photo

#### Nobody knew Di better than him

LONDON: Princess Diana's butler Paul Burrell, whom she described as "my rock," is to help choose the permanent memorial to her, reports Reuter. "We are delighted to have him on board as everyone says that

nobody knew her better," said a spokesman for Prime Minister Tony Blair on Saturday. Burrell, a lorry-driver's son who was Diana's butler for a decade, is to join a special committee deciding what would be

the most appropriate national monument. He flew to Paris to help make the funeral arrangements after

she was killed in a high-speed car crash with her millionaire companion Dodi Al Fayed. Among suggestions already put forward are commemorative

postage stamps, a statue in a London square, a memorial garden or a children's hospital.

#### ... and they lived happily ever after

SYDNEY: A 39-year-old factory worker and mother of five from a working-class Sydney suburb has won a 15 million Australian dollar (10.5 million US) lottery jackpot, officials said Sunday, reports AFP.

The New Zealand-born woman had been at her job on a factory assembly line and was unaware of her win until she saw signs about the unclaimed prize outside her local news agency. "I think it's too much for one person, but I'm very grateful for

the money, my life has been a real struggle and it will come in Despite her new-found wealth the woman plans to remain in Sydney's bloue-collar western suburbs, although she plans to

move out of the family's rented house to buy a home of their

Her other plans include celebrating and taking her husband and children on their first overseas holiday, including visits to Greece and Disneyland.

#### Caution for smokers who tend to inhale deeply

LONDON: Medical researchers say low-tar cigarettes are causing a new wave of cancer among smokers who tend to inhale them more deeply, according to British Sunday

newspaper, reports Reuter. British and American researchers say the new epidemic of cancer tends to form in cells deep in the tiny pockets of the

Smokers inhaling deeply expose more lung tissue to cancercausing agents and now suffer tumours further away from the main airways, a condition known as adenocarcinoma. researchers said "The idea that low-tar cigarettes are safer is misleading

because people change the way they smoke them," said Michael

Thun, Director of Epidemiology at the American Cancer Society. The milder the cigarette, the more likely a smoker is to inhale deeply into the lungs," he told the London Sunday Times.

# Sex workers demand legality for their profession in India

Calcutta, Nov 16: Young Parul was lured from Murshidabad district of West Bengal to hana Mukherjee, secretary of ing to keep silent," she added. Calcutta with the promise of a job as domestic help. She ended up in Sonagachi, the largest red light area in the city with about 5,000 sex workers and a floating population of some 1,500 other women, reports India Abroad News Service.

Like her, Suparna was abandoned by her husband after the first child was born. Today both women have joined some 3,000 others in the flesh trade to demand that sex workers be recognised as full-fledged workers "contributing to the national economy".

The Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC) (Indomitable Women's Coordination Committee), to which Suparna and Parul belong, is hosting a massive convention of sex workers from across the country here. The convention began Friday and will end to-

Sex workers from neighbouring Nepal and Bangladesh have also turned up for the conference. This year's convention is much more ambitious than

the conference last year, which was at the state level, said Sad-

"We're not in this profession by choice, society and poverty have pushed us into it," said sex worker Uma. "Now it's the society's responsibility to recognise us as any other worker," she

Recognition under the Industrial Labour Act will save the sex workers from harassment by the police, said convenor Mala Singh. At present, sex workers can be arrested under the Prevention of Immoral Trafficking Act for soliciting clients. Sex workers claim they are arrested under any pretext even from their homes and are let off only after paying a hefty

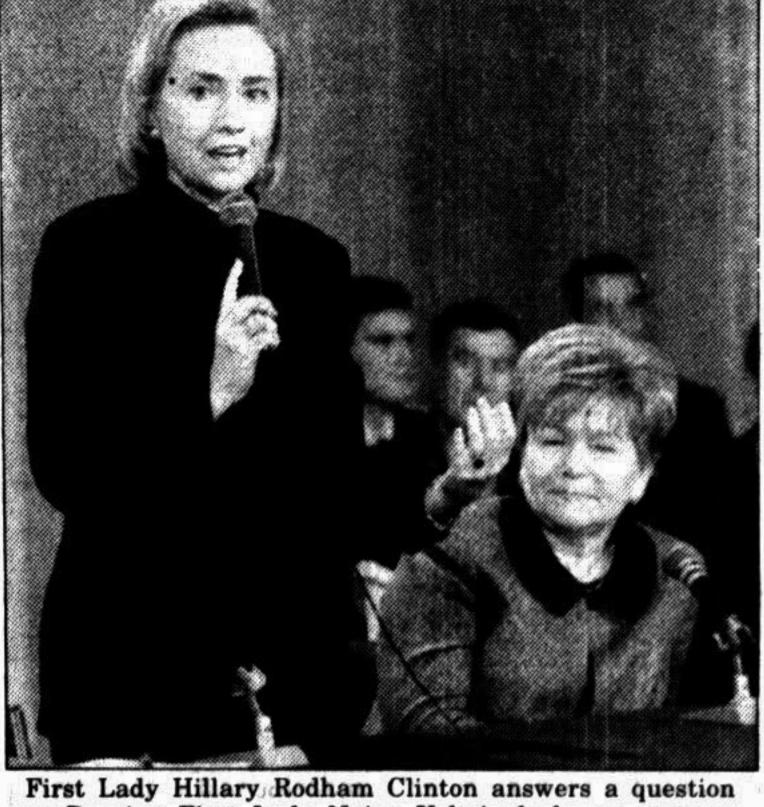
"Have they been able to stop the trade or trafficking of girls by this act?" asked Mukherjee who has just returned from attending a sex workers' convention in Manila, Philippines. "It's only a tool to make our life more difficult. That's why we demand repeal of this act. If people find our demand untenable, let them come forward

with their own suggestions and we can discuss. But we're not go-

With recognition as professionals, the convenors say, authorities could establish a monitoring body like a medical board or bar association comprising representatives from the police, government, lawyers and sex workers within the red light area. Since the age limit for practising prostitution would be fixed by this self-regulatory body, they would be able prevent minor girls from enter-

ing the profession, they argue. Established in July, 1995, by a handful of workers involved in a STD/HIV intervention programme in Sonagachi, DMSC's initial membership of about 105 has now ballooned to 30,000 with branches all over the state.

The DMSC is an offshoot of an STD/HIV intervention programme initiated by the All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health in 1992. The novel idea of involving the sex workers of Sonagachi in the programme paid rich dividends and soon the project was showcased as a role model in India.



as Russian First Lady Naina Yeltsin looks on at town hall meeting at the Urals Polytechnical University in Yekaterinburg, Russia, Saturday. The meeting was hosted by Urals Women's Association, the most prominent women's umbrella association in the Urals - AP/UNB photo region.