

President Clinton greets Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in the Oval Office of the White House on Thursday, where the two were to discuss efforts by Arafat to push Israel for more of the West Bank.

— AP/UNB photo

## Alleged affair with ex-White House intern Investigating prosecutors to subpoena Clinton confident, secretary

WASHINGTON, Jan 23: With former White House intern Monica Lewinsky spared questioning for now, Whitewater prosecutors looking into whether President Bill Clinton had an affair and tried to cover it up are subpoenaing a longtime Clinton confidant and an Oval Office secretary, reports AP.

Whitewater prosecutors have tape recordings suggesting that Lewinsky, concerned she was about to be questioned in the Paula Jones sexual harassment case against the president, talked to Clinton in December and was hooked up with Vernon Jordan to find a lawyer and a new job, lawyers familiar with the tapes said.

Jordan said Thursday only that Lewinsky was referred by Clinton's personal secretary, Betty Currie, and made no mention of whether the president or other White House officials were involved. Jordan and Currie

## BRIEFLY

**Landslide kills 63 in Mozambique:** Sixty-three people died in a landslide in the central Mozambican province of Zambezia earlier this week, Radio Mozambique reported Wednesday, revising an earlier toll of 13. AFP says from Maputo.

Nearly 1,500 were left homeless by Monday's disaster, which was triggered by a violent storm in the mountainous Millange district, near the Malawi border, the radio said.

**11 killed in Indonesian road mishap:** Eleven people were killed and seven others injured when a minibus ploughed into a ravine in west Java in Indonesia, the official Antara News Agency reported yesterday. AFP says from Jakarta.

The agency said the accident, on a mountain road between Bandung and Tasikmalaya, was caused by speeding.

**Blasts disturbing peace of Athens:** Small home made bombs have been disturbing the peace of Athens for more than a week causing damage but so far no casualties with their nightly explosions. AFP says from Athens.

Nearly a score of such devices have gone off in the city since the arrest on January 13 of Nikos Maziotis a 27-year-old anarchist militant accused of possessing explosives and belonging to an urban guerrilla group.

**70 killed in DRC floods:** Floods have claimed about 70 lives and made 22,000 people homeless in the northwestern part of former Zaire, the officials radio in what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo said late Thursday. AFP reports from Kinshasa.

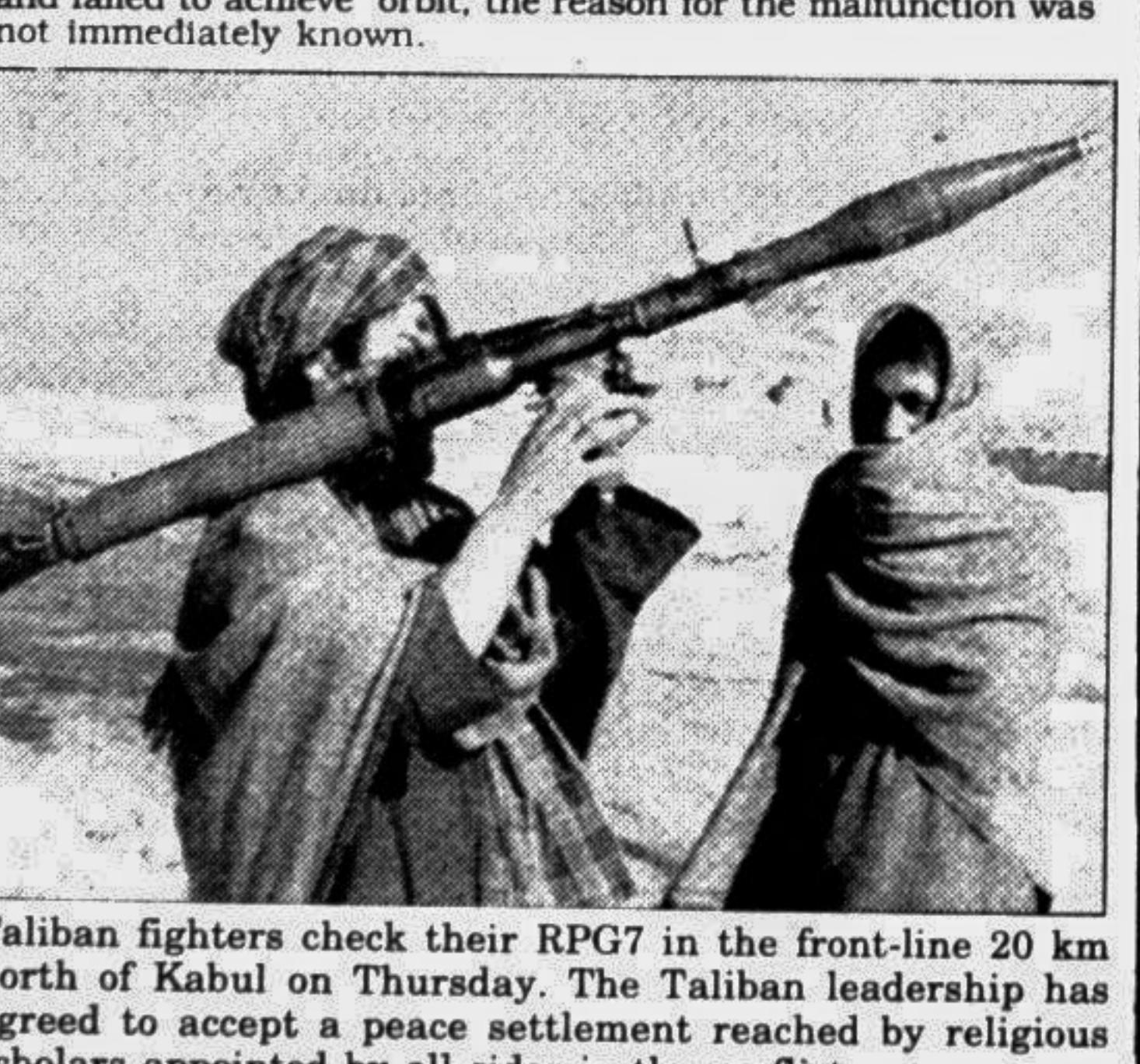
The Voice of the People radio said several weeks of torrential rain had raised the level of the Congo River and its affluents in Equateur region. It said 6,000 people were homeless in the town of Mbandaka where 600 houses were destroyed by the rising water.

**84 Kurds held near Greek border:** Pressing its crackdown on illegal immigration, Turkish police rounded up 84 Iraqi Kurds near the Greek border, the Anatolia news agency reported on Thursday. AP says from Edirne.

Thousands of would be immigrants have been apprehended in the past few weeks after European nations pressurised Turkey into taking better control of its borders following a massive exodus of Kurds and other foreigners to Europe.

**Israel fails to put sat in orbit:** Israel failed to put a satellite in orbit on Thursday during a launch clocked in secrecy, security sources said. Reuter reports from Jerusalem.

The Ofek 4 satellite, launched at 3 pm (1300 GMT) from a military site in central Israel, was to replace Israel's first operational reconnaissance satellite, the Ofek 3 which has been in space for more than two years. The sources said, the Ofek 4, manufactured by Israel Aircraft Industries (IAI), malfunctioned and failed to achieve orbit, the reason for the malfunction was not immediately known.



— AP/UNB photo

Taliban fighters check their RPG7 in the front-line 20 km north of Kabul on Thursday. The Taliban leadership has agreed to accept a peace settlement reached by religious scholars appointed by all sides in the conflict.

— AP/UNB photo

## International

# Clinton urges Israel, PA to trade gradual withdrawal from WB

WASHINGTON, Jan 23: President Bill Clinton ended a series of meetings with Palestinian and Israeli officials on Thursday, having urged them to trade gradual Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank for tougher Palestinian security actions, reports Reuters.

Clinton held two long meetings with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on Thursday morning his session with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday, as he sought to break a 10-month stalemate in the Middle East peace process.

The crux of his proposal is for the two sides to carry out the withdrawal and the security actions in small sequential steps to restore trust eroded over the past year by Jewish settlements and Palestinian suicide bombings in Israel.

According to a Palestinian official Clinton told Arafat he wanted Israel to withdraw from at least 10 per cent of the West Bank as part of the deal.

US officials declined to confirm the percentage, but they freely described the proposed process of phasing the Israeli

withdrawal and the Palestinian effort to improve security.

The president emphasised the need for a credible withdrawal, just as he emphasised with the chairman today the need for a maximum effort on security, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright told reporters during a break in the talks.

"We've introduced the concept of parallel processes of implementation of these commitments," she added. "We believe this is a practical way to rebuild confidence that both sides will live up to their obligations under the OSLO agreements."

After months of secret talks in the Norwegian capital, Palestinian and Israeli officials signed a declaration in 1993 that outlined plans for Palestinian self rule in the occupied territories.

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat, also during a break in the talks quoted Clinton as telling Arafat at their first White House meeting, "I want a credible and significant (Israeli) redeployment. I want two digits."

Erekat did not give the size of the Israeli redeployment Arafat wanted but said Arafat raised the issue with Clinton, the spokesman added. "Clinton responded, I can't get you what you want but I don't accept what Netanyahu offered."

US officials said Arafat, addressing one Israeli concern handed Clinton a letter spelling out for the first time key details of a 1996 decision to annul parts of a Palestinian Charter that call for Israel's destruction.

US and Palestinian officials said the likely outcome of this week's talks would be that Netanyahu and Arafat reflected for a week or two before US mediation efforts resumed.

"As he did with Prime Minister Netanyahu, the president asked the chairman (Arafat) to take these ideas back for careful consideration a White House spokeswoman said after Clinton's final meeting with Arafat on Thursday evening.

One person familiar with the talks said the main stumbling block was not the percentage of withdrawal but the loss of trust between the two sides.

One Palestinian official suggested the extent of the loss in his assessment of Netanyahu's position.

"The man is not coming to ask for security, the man is coming to use security as a pretext for not doing anything," the Palestinian official said.

### Raid on Hamas hideout

AP adds: Palestinian police raided a hideout belonging to the militant Hamas group on Thursday, seizing timers for bombs and a submachine gun, a Palestinian security official said.

Two people were arrested during the raid in the West Bank city of Nablus, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Earlier this month, Palestinian police uncovered a Hamas bomb factory containing almost a ton of explosives. The Palestinians then arrested two Hamas activists and convicted them of building the bombs used in attacks that killed 26 people in Jerusalem last summer.

## Bus, van collision leaves 20 dead in Pakistan

LAHORE, Pakistan, Jan 23: At least 20 people were killed and 40 injured when a passenger bus collided with a van in Pakistani Punjab province today, police said, reports AFP.

They said the condition of 10 of the wounded, who were rushed to hospital, was serious. Police, quoting witnesses, said the packed bus from Sialkot town bordering India was heading towards Narowal, 180 km northwest of here.

Apparently the bus driver lost control due to reckless driving and rammed into the van coming from the opposite direction.

## Cracks appear in Great Wall following quake

BEIJING, Jan 23: An earthquake that killed 50 people in north China earlier this month left many cracks in the Great Wall, the state-run Xinhua News Agency reported Thursday.

The magnitude 6.2 quake on January 10 left cracks in the wall in Shangyi, Zhangbei and Wanquan counties of Hebei province, Xinhua quoted He Yong, director of the Beijing Administration of Cultural Relics, as saying.

The wall in that area was mostly built during the Ming Dynasty, which ruled from 1368 to 1644. About 20 buildings from that period also have cracks from the quake, He said.

The report did not say how serious the cracks were. It quoted He as saying that neither the wall nor the buildings sustained other damage.

## All parties agree to ceasefire in Bougainville

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand, Jan 23: Leaders from all parties to the Bougainville conflict agreed today to an irrevocable ceasefire on April 30 to end a nine-year secessionist war in the Papua New Guinean island, reports Reuters.

The deal, which builds on an interim truce in place since last October, was struck after five days of peace talks in New Zealand and includes a request for the United Nations Security Council to endorse an extended ceasefire monitoring operation.

## His hobby is to lose in elections!

BAREILLY, India, Jan 23: A 63-year-old eccentric Indian whose passion is to fight elections is preparing to jump into the fray once again — with the sole intention of losing, reports AFP.

The greying Kaka Joginder Singh is undeterred by more than 300 defeats he has suffered in a variety of elections since he began contesting in 1962.

"I have had the pleasure of heavily losing elections on more than 300 occasions from 14 of India's 25 states," says Singh at his family home here.

"But please vote," he adds, seated on a cot on the verandah, that I never fight elections. I never seek votes. Only criminals contest elections. I only swim in the sea of elections for sheer pleasure."

Russia also supports closing the file.

Even with the support of China and Russia, most Security Council members are not ready to say that Iraq's nuclear weapons programmes has been dismantled, diplomats said.

## Muslims are hurt to see their patriotism questioned by BJP'

Bharatiya Janata Party has been accused of fanning religious tension in this predominantly Hindu country. Vajpayee is considered a moderate within the party.

Opinion polls have predicted Bharatiya Janata Party will win the most seats in February-March elections, but not the majority needed to govern without partners.

Meanwhile, a woman who organised campaigns against witch hunts after she was accused of being a witch is running for office in upcoming elections, a newspaper reported Friday.

Ipsita Roy, famous for her 1987-88 campaign against the killing of rural women who were accused of being witches, will run from the western city of Calcutta on the centrist Congress Party ticket, the Indian Express daily reported.

She told the newspaper she would make her campaign against witch hunts one of her main election planks.

Roy was accused of practising witchcraft when she gained fame in Calcutta for her New Age technique of using crystals to treat people with nervous and mental disorders. That experience led to her interest in the plight of rural women accused of being witches.



Pope John Paul II shakes hands with Cuban President Fidel Castro at the Palace of the Revolution prior to their private meeting in Havana Thursday. The pope is on a historic five-day visit to the communist nation.

— AP/UNB photo

## UNSC divided in assessing Iraq's N-potential

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 23: The UN Security Council was divided Thursday in assessing Iraq's nuclear potential on the eve of a briefing by the top UN weapons inspector on failed Baghdad talks, reports AFP.

Following a council briefing by an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) expert, the United States and Britain blocked an attempt by Russia, China and France to declare Iraq free of nuclear weapons.

The stand reflected the traditional division among the five permanent members regarding Iraq.

The United States and Britain adopt a tough line to protest Iraqi defiance of the UN weapons inspectors, who have been barred from visiting certain Iraqi sites since last October.

China, France and Russia want to encourage Iraq to comply with UN resolutions requiring the verified destruction of all Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

"We believe the remaining

nuclear weapons programme Chinese UN Ambassador Huasun said.

"We believe that the remaining issues in the nuclear field have been basically solved," Ambassador Qin Huasun told reporters after the council was briefed by the IAEA's team leader in Iraq, Gary Dillon.

"The nuclear file should be closed," Qin added.

That view was echoed by Russian Ambassador Sergei Lavrov who said Dillon's briefing on a January 14 IAEA report confirmed our conviction that the (nuclear) file is closed for all practical purposes."

However, US Ambassador Bill Richardson said: "We don't see any reason to close the nuclear file because there are significant gaps, in our judgement, that have been described today by the IAEA."

He accused Iraq of continuing to conceal information and "lack of cooperation," with the inspectors on the nuclear issue.

AP adds: China said Thursday the Security Council should close the International Atomic Energy Agency's file on Iraq's

## Botha appears in court before black judge

GEORGE, South Africa, Jan 23: Former President PW Botha, living the hard-line apartheid leader, appeared before black judge Friday on charges of defying South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, reports AP.

After a short court session, Judge Victor Lugojo postponed the case until February 23, when Botha will be asked to submit a plea to a contempt charge for ignoring a subpoena to testify in person before the commission investigating apartheid-era political crimes.

Dressed in a dark suit and walking with the aid of a

wooden stick, Botha, 82, was accompanied by fiancee Reinette Te Water Naude and member of his family when he arrived at the court.

Known as the "Big Crocodile" for his bullying and sometimes ruthless manner, Botha's appearance before Lugojo symbolised change in South Africa since the nation's first all-race election in 1994.

Police constructed a wall of razor-wire seven feet (two metres) high around the building in George, a coastal town 400 kilometres (240 miles) east of Cape Town near where Botha, 82, lives in retirement.

## Vietnam ends border talks with China amid tensions

HANOI, Jan 23: One day after concluding a round of border talks with China, Vietnam on Friday issued a hard-hitting treatise that accused China of "land-grabbing" along the northern frontier, reports AP.

Vietnam has accused China of building a landfall jetty along the Dong Mo River that divides the Chinese region of Guangxi and Vietnam's Quang Ninh province.

The jetty, Vietnam says, alters existing demarcation lines into Vietnamese territory by 8 metres (26 feet) along a one-kilometre (0.62 metre) stretch, the Communist Party newspaper, The People, reported.

Although a seemingly minor infraction, emotions along the tense border run high.

The border talks, which ended Thursday, were part of ongoing negotiations

## Off the Record

### Churchill's cigar to aid cancer victims!

LONDON: A cigar which once belonged to Winston Churchill is to be auctioned next month to aid cancer sufferers exactly 54 years after it first went on the block, reports AFP.

The cigar, the trademark of Britain's wartime prime minister, was originally auctioned on February 4, 1994 to aid Russian victims of Nazi Germany.

It is expected to fetch at least 500 pounds (800 dollars) the second time around.

"Winston Churchill's name is famous throughout the world and you never see a picture of him without his trademark Havana," auctioneer Martin Lambert said.

"It really is a little bit of history."

The cigar was sent for auction after an anonymous donor offered it to the sue-ryder home at Cheltenham in Western England which cares for 100 cancer sufferers.

It is wonderful to think that this cigar is still helping people 50 years after it was originally sold for a good cause a spokesman for the home said.

### For those who lose loved ones to suicide...

KANSAS CITY, Missouri: Hallmark Cards Inc. is making a sympathy card for those who lose someone to suicide, expanding the company's collection of death and illness-related cards, reports AP.

The card, the first in a possible line, is to be released in April.

Hallmark is the US greeting card industry leader with 44 per cent of the market share.

Hallmark's Lifesong collection, which includes the card, celebrates all experiences, beautiful and painful, company spokeswoman Rachel Bolton said Wednesday.

"There was a resounding response for this kind of card, cards that deal with death and dying and spirituality," she said.</