

No UN plans to persuade India, Pakistan to sign CTBT

VIENNA, Apr 11: The United Nations has no plans to send any special delegation to India or Pakistan to get the two nations to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), a senior U.N. diplomat said here, reports India Abroad News Service.

In response to questions what steps the CTBT Organisation (CTBTO) proposed to take to win over the crucial non-signatories, Alfonso Celso Deouro Preto, Ambassador of Brazil to the U.N. in Vienna, said he and the international community have "deep respect" for India and the treaty office has no plans to send a mission to New Delhi. There were no such plans for Islamabad either, he stressed.

The CTBTO will be the secretariat of the treaty, and until the treaty comes into force, it will hold the status of a provisional secretariat.

Expanding on Deouro Preto's statement, Wolfgang Hoffmann, head of the provisional secretariat, said the treaty office does not have the power to put pressure on any country to sign and ratify the CTBT.

The treaty can't enter into force only when all 44 countries which either possess some kind of nuclear facility or are mem-

bers of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva have signed and ratified it.

Three countries belonging to this club -- India, Pakistan and North Korea -- have not signed the treaty while Israel, another nuclear threshold country, has signed but with no sign yet of ratification. A country becomes a member of a treaty when it ratifies it, usually through its Parliament.

Deouro Preto's and Hoffmann's comments came just days after Britain and France, two nuclear weapons states, ratified the treaty. So far 149 countries, including the nuclear five, have signed the CTBT but only 13 of them have ratified it. Six of the 13 belong to the club of 44.

Hoffmann said probably the next nuclear weapons state to ratify it would be the United States and both China and Russia would probably wait until the U.S. ratification.

Should the treaty not enter into force by next year, an international conference comprising those who have signed it is to be held here, probably in October 1999.

While international diplomacy weighs its options of getting the treaty into force, work to establish the global monitor-

ing network to ensure no country violates the treaty is going ahead, though in some areas not as fast as expected.

The monitoring system will include two components: the international monitoring system (IMS) made up of 321 mostly seismic, but also radio-nuclide and acoustic stations covering the whole earth, and the international data centre (IDC) which will link all the stations. The latter will be located in Vienna.

Of the 321, about 80 will be in Asia, including Australia, Iran, Mongolia and New Zealand. In South Asia itself there will be five stations -- seismological stations in Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka and an infrasound station in Pakistan. China is to host ten stations -- six seismological, two radio-nuclide and two infrasound.

India had initially offered four stations, but later withdrew its offer.

CTBT officials wish to have the whole structure up and running by next year, but so far not a single monitoring station has been fully set up. While some of the 321 stations will be established anew, others will be existing stations with upgrading

to suit the needs of the CTBT monitoring programme.

Privately, some CTBTO officials say they are not to blame for the slow movement in finalising the monitoring stations. The treaty office and countries where the stations are going to be located have to sign agreements and the officials point out none of the 30 plus countries which have received draft agreements from Vienna have returned them with signatures.

Hoffmann however said he expects to have 30 of the stations linked to the IDC via satellite by the end of this year. The IDC, on the other hand, has seen faster progress. Seven computer servers have already been installed and next month the first phase of the software is to be installed. The software will allow the IDC to acquire, process and analyse data from 65 stations worldwide on a test basis.

The IDC experts will analyse the incoming data and should there be signals of a suspicious event, they would forward it to member countries with their own evaluation. It will be up to the member countries to decide on further measures, which could range from questions to the country concerned to sending an inspection team.

Three shot dead in Karachi

KARACHI, Apr 11: Unidentified men shot dead three people, including an actor of former Premier Benazir Bhutto's party in continued violence in Pakistan's troubled city of Karachi, police said today, reports AFP.

Khalid Dalmyia, member of Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party, was killed overnight by gunmen riding a car as he chatted with friends outside a shop in the city's eastern Gulshan-E-Eqbal area.

Another man was shot dead on Friday in the city's central Liaquatnagar area and a newspaper hawk was gunned down in eastern Malir district, police said.

More than 70 people have been killed in incidents of terrorism and violence here since last month.

Karachi has a history of political, ethnic and religious violence that has claimed more than 3,000 lives during recent years.

Di's memory being exploited, opinion poll says

LONDON, Apr 11: A large majority of Britons believe Princess Diana's memory is being exploited and that there is too much media coverage of her, even to death, an opinion poll indicates, reports AP.

A Gallup Poll published in the Daily Telegraph on Saturday said 90 per cent of those asked said Diana's memory was being exploited and 80 per cent agreed her memory was being used in bad taste.

The use of the official logo of the princess's memorial charity on a tub of margarine has been widely criticised, and the poll found 94 per cent of those asked said that use was wrong.

Seventy-four per cent said it was wrong to use her face on souvenir products and 73 per cent said it was wrong to sell tickets to visits to Althorp, the Spencer family estate where the princess was buried after her death in a car crash Aug 31.

The newspaper published a list described as "The Exploiters", showing the percentages of people polled who thought each one was exploiting Diana's memory.

At the top of the list, with 85 per cent, were the news media, followed by 62 per cent for the charity industry, 61 per cent for business in general, 46 per cent for the Spencer family and 36 per cent for "the general public".

Asked to assess the media coverage, 71 per cent said there was too much, 2 per cent said there was too little, 26 per cent found it about right, and 1 per cent didn't know.

Thakre set to become BJP president

NEW DELHI, Apr 11: A hard-liner in India's Hindu Nationalist Party is set to become its president, party officials said today, reports AFP.

Kushabhau Thakre, a senior leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party), would be elected as a "consensus" candidate during the upcoming party elections on April 20, they said.

A BJP spokesman said Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Home Minister Lal Krishna Advani were among the top leaders to propose Thakre.

Karadzic in Srpska?

BELGRADE, Apr 10: Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb wartime leader wanted by the UN War Crimes Tribunal on genocide charges, was seen in the Republika Srpska (RS) three days ago, an RS Senator claimed Friday, reports AFP.

Senator Momcilovic Vojvodic told the Daily Dnevni Telegram appeared today, that he had had coffee with Karadzic three days ago "in his shelter in the Republika Srpska, the Bosnian Serb Entity".

The senator said Karadzic had no intention of giving himself up in the near future to the UN International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague.

The Daily, quoting defence sources, said it would take at least a decade for the spy satellite to be launched.

Sareen said India would "put into use data from satellites belonging to friendly nations to ascertain whether" Pakistan's recently tested "Ghauri" surface-to-surface missile has a 1,500 kilometre range.

"We will have a clear picture of the range and capabilities of the Ghauri within a week," he said.

Islamabad test fired the missile, designed to carry a 700-kilogram payload, on Monday.

Sareen said India's missile capabilities were "far ahead of Pakistan".

"It will be 10 years before Pakistan's inter range ballistic missile will enter the production stage," he said.

Panel set up to review India's defence policy

NEW DELHI, Apr 11: The Hindu Nationalist-led coalition government has set up a panel to review India's defence policy, reports said today, reports AFP.

Newspapers said Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee told a three-member panel to work out "the constitution, role and function" of a National Security Council promised by the Nationalists in their manifesto.

The Nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party) had promised to establish the council to "analyse the military, economic and political threats to the nation and to advise the government".

AI blasts Peru's military courts

NEW YORK, Apr 11: Amnesty International blasted Peru's military courts on Friday for trials it called "a parody of justice," and said Lori Berenson, a US citizen convicted of having guerrilla ties, did not get a fair trial, Reuter reports.

The human rights group's US chapter said Berenson's trial, in which she was convicted by anonymous military judges to life in prison, fell far short of international standards and prison conditions for her and other suspects were "inhuman."

"Peru continues to mock human rights guarantees with trials that are but a parody of justice," the Organisation said in a statement.

"Lori Berenson was sentenced to life imprisonment under Peruvian laws and procedures that fall far short of meeting international norms," it said.

India to launch spy satellite

NEW DELHI, Apr 11: India plans to launch a spy satellite and will use images from "friendly countries" to ascertain the range of Pakistan's medium-range missile reports said today, says AFP.

Air Force Chief SK Sareen was quoted by newspapers as saying "the defence establishment's requirement of a spy satellite had been specified and put up for approval" by the government.

India currently depends on foreign satellites for gathering military intelligence.

Sareen said the spy satellite would be made locally and used for gathering intelligence on "tactical areas, tank and troop concentrations and data for missile targeting."

The project will be implemented in collaboration with the Indian Space Research Organisation, he told the Indian

Key politicians' achievements in Belfast accord

UNDATED: Friday's Northern Ireland peace accord allowed key players each to come away claiming they had achieved a key principle. The players and their chief goals, reports AP.

Reform-minded British prime minister since May 1997. Says he "values" Northern Ireland's union with Britain, but invited IRA-allied Sinn Fein party to join talks after Irish Republican Army truce of July 1997.

Goal: Majority public approval for any changes in Northern Ireland.

Bertie Ahern: Irish taoiseach (Gaelic for "chief" or prime minister) since June 1997. As leader of Sinn Fein, Ireland's largest and traditional anti-British party, holds confidence of the north's Catholic leaders.

Goal: Equal role with British government in shaping Northern Ireland's future.

Davin Trimble: Leader of the Ulster Unionist Party since September 1995, when Protestants fearful of negotiations turned to hard-line voices. In 1974, sided with Ulster unionist dissidents who toppled party

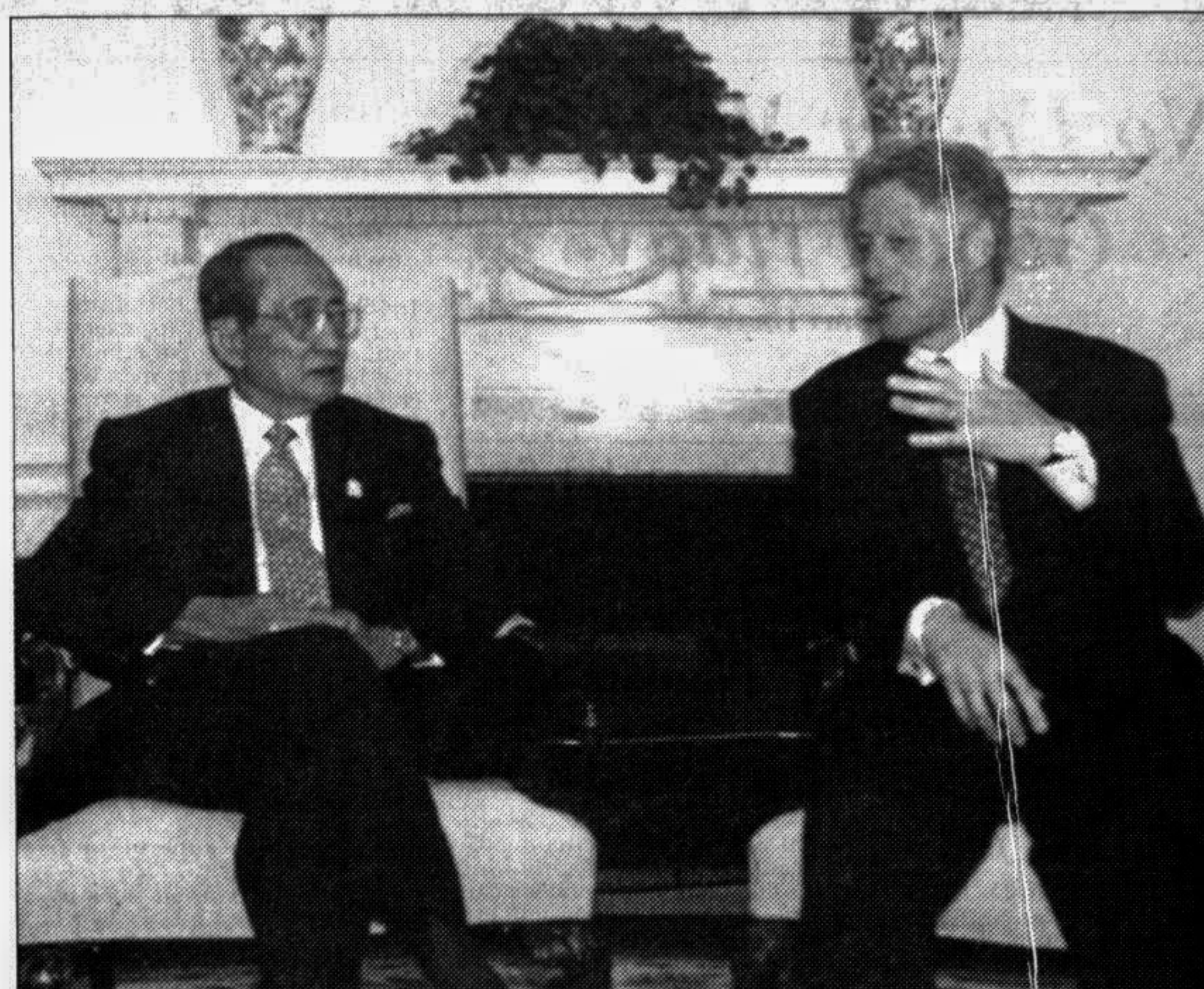
leaders then seeking compromise over Northern Ireland. Now, runs same risk in a party already publicly divided over agreement that cedes the Catholic demand for formal ties between both parts of Ireland.

Goal: Stable government within Northern Ireland that "cooperates" with Irish Republic.

Gerry Adams: History records him as a senior IRA commander throughout 1970s, and Protestants see blood on his hands today. President of Sinn Fein party since 1983, after his breakthrough election as west Belfast's abstaining member of British Parliament. Has delivered Sinn Fein from political wilderness toward its status now as the rising voice of Northern Ireland's Catholic minority. Has cultivated close relations with White House and others who see him as best placed to maintain IRA ceasefire.

Goal: An agreement that promotes eventual Irish unity. IRA prisoners gaining early releases.

John Hume: Since 1979



President Clinton meets with Philippine President Fidel Ramos in the Oval Office of the White House on Friday. Ramos said he and President Clinton agreed on Friday to reinforce their countries' strong economic and security alliance but reached no resolution on disputes over Filipino veterans' benefits or the return of two Philippine church bells.

— AP/UNB photo

Reaction over N-Ireland peace deal

BELFAST, Northern Ireland, Apr 11: Peace negotiators have proclaimed "a new beginning" for Northern Ireland, with the emphasis on "beginning", reports AP.

Major issues remain to be resolved, approval by two pivotal parties is uncertain and referendums in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland must be won next month before the accord takes effect.

But despite the remaining obstacles, the eight exhilarated and exhausted participating parties signed off Friday afternoon on a document that took the peace process a giant leap forward.

The chairman of the talks, former US Sen George Mitchell, was cautiously optimistic following the grueling 32-hour negotiating marathon.

"This agreement is a reason to celebrate. But by itself, it guarantees nothing," Mitchell said.

"If it is approved in referendums north and south, it offers the chance for a better future. But to secure that future, it will take the good-faith efforts of the leaders gathered here, and the commitment of all the people of Northern Ireland."

The accord is expected to pass easily in the south, but hard-line Protestants vow to defeat it in the north, saying it makes too many concessions to the IRA-allied Sinn Fein party.

The Ulster Unionists, the largest pro-British Protestant party in Northern Ireland, and Sinn Fein also must run it by their memberships before committing to the agreement.

And nothing guarantees that at least one of several hard-line groups, which have opposed the negotiations all along, won't resume their sporadic bombing and shooting campaigns.

The Irish Republican Army hinted as much in its traditional Easter message, vowing, "We remain committed to ending British rule in Ireland and the reunification of our country. We will carefully study the outcome of the talks process against its potential" to unite Ireland.

The politicians at the negotiating venue Friday — many of whom found themselves teary-eyed at the prospect of peace at last acknowledged all the obstacles ahead. But they gave themselves at least one day to bask in their historic achievement.

"Today, we have just a sense of the prize that lies before us," said British Prime Minister Tony Blair, standing beside his Irish counterpart, Bertie Ahern.

"Today's agreement is a victory for peace and democratic politics," Ahern agreed. "We have seized the initiative from the men of violence. Let's not relinquish it, now or ever."

The accord — the most important since the foundation of Northern Ireland 77 years ago — raises hopes for an end to a conflict that has left more than 3,400 dead since 1969 in Northern Ireland, Britain and the Irish Republic.

It spells out how Protestants and Catholics should govern the territory together at Stormont, the same place where the British government abolished a Protestant-dominated parliament and assumed "direct rule" in 1972.

This time, a 108-seat assembly, to be created after a June election, would "restore to the people the fundamental democratic right to govern themselves," Mitchell said.

That assembly would be led by a 12-member executive committee, probably headed by Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble.

Of central importance for the north's Catholic minority, that assembly would have until autumn to agree how it would participate in a new North-South Council linking the British-ruled north with the rest of Ireland. Britain would hand no responsibilities back to the assembly until it did that.

New drug to help prevent heart attacks

BETHESDA, MD, Apr 11: A new drug to help prevent heart attacks was backed by a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advisory panel on Friday, Reuter reports.

Aggrastat, to be sold by Merck Co., prevents blood platelets from clumping into dangerous clots that can block arteries.

The panel said the drug could be used in combination with the blood thinner Heparin in patients who come to emergency rooms with chest pain known as Unstable Angina.

The FDA is not bound by advisory panel recommendations but usually accepts them.

Unstable Angina is the leading cause of US hospital admissions and is usually treated

with Aspirin or Heparin. Left untreated, clots can grow or break off, leading to a heart attack or death.

Drugs like Aggrastat are designed to delay or avoid the need for heart bypass surgery or artery-widening Angioplasty procedures.

Although a majority of the advisory panel found the results of an initial study to be weak, a second trial call prisms-plus was stronger.

Patients in prism-plus had worse diseases, and because there initially seemed to be more deaths in those taking aggrastat alone, they were given heparin in addition.

In the end, 773 patients taking the combination were compared to 797 patients getting heparin alone.

Chinese FM arrives in Indonesia

JAKARTA, Apr 11: Indonesia prepared to welcome the arrival of Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan Saturday as the Southeast Asian country begins implementing reforms aimed at recovering from its worst economic crisis in 30 years, reports AP.

The three-day visit will be Tang's first solo trip abroad as foreign minister since he was elected to the position by China's parliament last month.

Indonesia's economic problems are expected to dominate the planned talks Sunday between Tang and Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas.

Tang is scheduled to meet President Suharto on Monday before departing for neighboring Singapore.

BRIEFLY

659 die of AIDS in Vietnam: A total of 659 people have died of AIDS in Vietnam, a report said yesterday, citing the official health ministry figures, AFP reports from Hanoi.

The Hanoi Moi Daily newspaper said another 1,207 people had developed full blown Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. The report said officials have recorded 8,297 cases of HIV infections to date, but foreign health officials say the figure grossly understates the extent of infections.

Former Vietnamese FM dead: Nguyen Co Thach, the former Vietnamese foreign minister and master diplomat, has died at the age of 74, a Vietnamese diplomat said yesterday, AFP reports from Hanoi.

Croatia to seek Sakic's extradition: Croatia will ask Argentina to extradite former concentration camp director Dinko Sakic to stand trial for crimes he allegedly committed during World War II, the Croatian ambassador here said on Friday, AFP reports from Buenos Aires.

Earthquake kills 10 in Iran: Ten people were killed and another 10 injured in a strong earthquake that struck part of eastern Iran on Friday, official Iranian media monitored in London said, Reuters report from London.

Iranian television said earlier that a quake measuring 5.9 on the Richter scale hit the region of Birjand, near the border with Afghanistan, at 7:31 pm (15:01 GMT). Teams of aid workers and ambulances were dispatched to the affected areas, according to IRNA. Iranian Television said the quake also buffeted the communities of Qaen, Gonabad and others in the south of Khorasan province.

Talbot to visit European capitals: Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbot will visit key European capitals later this month for talks on the situation in Kosovo and the former Yugoslavia, it was announced on Friday, Reuter reports from Washington.

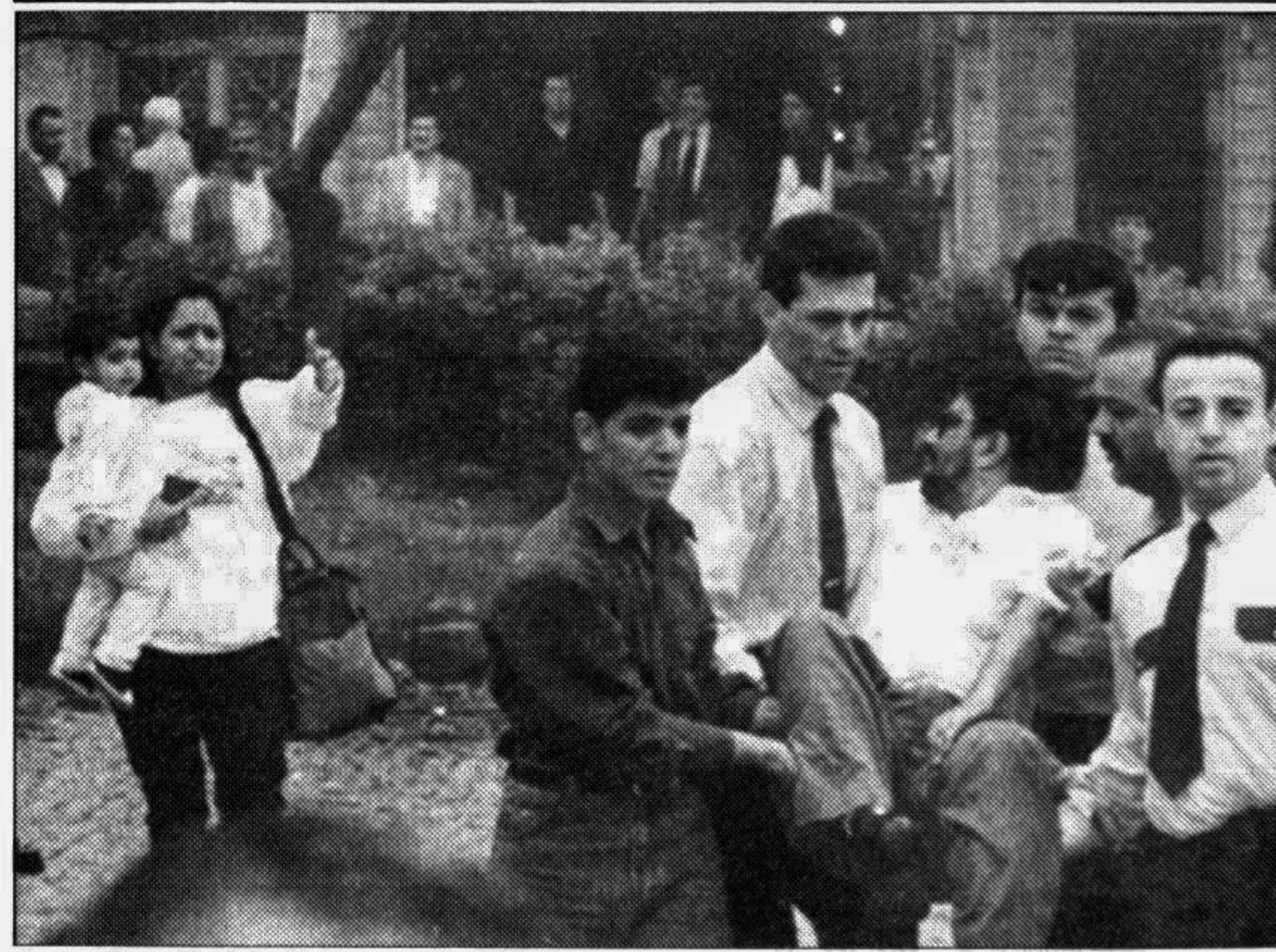
The April 14-22 trip will take Talbot to London, Rome, Paris, Bonn, Moscow, Brussels, Warsaw, Tirana and Skopje.

Land dispute claims 1 in China: One man was killed and 50 were injured in clashes between police and villagers over a land dispute in southern China's Guangdong province, it was reported here Saturday, AFP says from Hong Kong.

Liang Jinlo, 35, died on Thursday, eight days after being injured in a battle with police in Yuanzhou village, Boluo County, the Oriental Daily news said quoting sources. More than 100 police were called in to break up a protest on April 1 by villagers complaining that authorities had taken their land without granting any compensation, the report said.

Workers' rally for wages in China: Some 200 workers from a state firm in Southern China staged a demonstration yesterday to demand payment of wages owed, a human rights organization said, AFP says from Beijing.

The workers, from the Human Enamel company in Changsha, Hunan province, began their demonstration outside the central government offices at 10:00 am. The Information Centre on Human Rights and Democratic Movement in China said.



An unidentified Indian tourist with child gestures as her injured husband is evacuated after a bomb explosion in downtown Istanbul on Friday. A concussion bomb placed at a park near an ancient cistern slightly injured nine people, but caused no damage to the historic site visited by hundreds daily. No group claimed responsibility for the bomb but officials believed it was planted by the Kurdish rebel group PKK.

— AP/UNB photo