

## US Capitol shooting Weston charged with murder

WASHINGTON, July 26: Hospitalised in critical condition, a troubled loner has been charged with the murder of two police officers inside the US Capitol. The suspect's motives remained unknown as investigators studied "paranoid rantings" from his past, reports AP.

Less than 24 hours after the shooting, the Capitol was reopened to tourists, many of whom left flowers on the round a steps in tribute to the slain officers.

Russell E Weston Jr, 41, from Rimini, Montana, was listed in critical condition Saturday after undergoing a second round of surgery for gunshot wounds. A doctor said his chances of survival were "about 50-50."

A single FBI complaint filed Saturday in US District Court in Washington accuses Weston of killing both officers. An accompanying affidavit said that when Weston was approached just inside an entrance to the Capitol by officer Jacob J Chestnut, "Weston took out a handgun he had in his possession, pointed it at officer

# Voting in Cambodia ends peacefully

PHNOM PENH, July 26: Cambodians began voting here today in their country's first self-organised, pluralistic elections in more than three decades, reports AFP.

AFP adds: Polling stations in Cambodia closed today after millions of people cast ballots in the country's first self-organised, pluralistic elections in more than 30 years.

Voting, which was largely peaceful, ended at 4:00 pm (0900 GMT).

Amidst a heavy turnout, The National Election Committee said anyone in line to vote at 4:00 PM would be allowed to cast a ballot.

More than 5.4 million voters, about 98 per cent of those eligible, were expected to turn out to cast ballots to choose from an unprecedented 39 parties competing.

Although human rights groups and the opposition have complained of widespread political intimidation and violence and the international community refused to certify the campaign as free and fair there was hope that the polls could be regarded as acceptable.

"I feel Cambodians will turn out in large numbers," said

Glenys Kinnock, the European Union's special representative for the election. "I feel that Cambodians may surprise us today."

AP adds: For the first time in history, former Khmer Rouge guerrillas took part in a democratic vote.

Voting at a school, Hun Sen kissed his ballot and sought to dispel fears he would call out the army if his Cambodian People's Party loses, saying he was prepared to hand over power within hours after results were known.

Hun Sen, other leaders and independent analysts said that no party will win a majority of the 122 National Assembly seats and a coalition should result. That could mean either give-and-take power-sharing or, based on past experience, infighting and turmoil.

"If my party loses, I'm ready to be a coconut vendor or a fisherman," said Hun Sen, 47, looking healthy after an emergency appendectomy July 17. "Today, one can see the Cambodian people have achieved victory. I also share this victory."

The main challengers, Prince Norodom Ranariddh, who was deposed by Hun Sen as

co-prime minister last year in fighting that devastated parts of Phnom Penh, and former finance minister Sam Rainsy cast ballots in the central town of Kompong Cham.

An upbeat Ranariddh said the election represented a "choice between democracy and totalitarianism" and marked "a great day for democracy in Cambodia."

Sam Rainsy, whose party has suffered the brunt of pre-election killings, was more somber.

"It can be a turning point," Sam Rainsy said. "I hope it will, but I have no illusion. At least it shows the Cambodian people want to vote. We can be disappointed later at the result."

Phnom Penh was calm. But in remote northern jungles, the army was on high alert to prevent die-hard remnants of the Khmer Rouge guerrillas from preventing the thousands of ex-comrades who have made peace in recent years from voting.

Another AP report adds: Facts and figures on Cambodia's parliamentary elections:

The Election:

— Voters will choose a 122-member constituent assembly

and a new government will be formed.

— They are the first multi-party elections since 1993, when UN peacekeeping troops were part of a \$3 billion effort to usher in a new era of peace and democracy after the Khmer Rouge genocide of the late 1970s, followed by a decade of Vietnamese occupation.

— The Khmer Rouge boycotted the 1993 elections. Then still a significant guerrilla force, they are today virtually extinct due to mass defections. Apart from a handful of die-hard rebels, thousands of ex-guerrillas will cast ballots for the first time in their lives.

— The elections come a year after Cambodian leader Hun Sen ousted Prince Norodom Ranariddh, whose party won the 1993 polls, as his co-prime minister. Critics fear that Hun Sen has rigged the process in his favour.

— The international community hopes that new polls will return political stability following last year's violence, though critics have accused them of turning a blind eye to abuses. The United Nations and donor countries have given \$18

28 million in aid.

— The Cambodian government is officially organising the election for the first time.

Voting:

— Balloting takes place at 11,699 polling stations throughout 21 provinces and the capital, Phnom Penh. Initial results are expected Aug. 1.

— 678 international observers have been deployed to oversee the voting, along with thousands of national observers. Hun Sen-linked organisations have been accused of trying to dominate the Cambodian component.

— Some 5.4 million people - about 98 per cent of all eligible voters and about half of the total population of 10 million - are registered to vote. The chance of disruption is low, despite an attack on an election convoy last week by die-hard Khmer Rouge rebels.

Parties:

— The three contenders are Hun Sen's formerly communist Cambodian People's Party, the royalist FUNCINPEC led by Ranariddh, son of King Norodom Sihanouk, and prominent dissident Sam Rainsy's party, named after himself.

## India-Pakistan dispute may lead to N-conflict, warns JKLF leader

NEW DELHI, July 26: A raging dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir could lead to a nuclear conflict, a Muslim separatist leader was reported saying today, reports AFP.

Amanullah Khan, chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) Muslim separatist group, urged the two south Asian rivals to seek a peaceful solution to their protracted dispute, a Press Trust of India (PTI) report said.

Khan said: "After India and Pakistan have gone nuclear, the root cause of the enmity between them, that is, Kashmir, can well result in a catastrophe unless it is solved to reasonable satisfaction of both of them."

"We appeal for a satisfactory, reasonable and permanent solution."

"Such a solution will not only save South Asia from horrors of a nuclear or a conventional war but will also herald the dawn of a peaceful, prosperous and respectful future for India, Pakistan and Kashmir," said the 64-year-old JKLF leader said.

## BRIEFLY

**Japanese ship still ablaze:** The Japanese cargo ship that caught fire at Khaled seaport in Al-Sharjah, emirate of the United Arab Emirates Thursday night is still in blaze, Xinhua says from Abu Dhabi.

Sources from the civil defence and coast guard said the ship has been towed 30 nautical miles away from the port after the failure to extinguish the fire.

**10 sailors punished in US:** Seven male and three female sailors from the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln have been punished after a group sex incident in a Hong Kong hotel two weeks ago, the Navy said, AP says from Seattle.

The 10 crew members have been reduced in rank one grade, restricted to the ship for 60 days, and fined 50 per cent of their pay for two months, US Navy Lt Dave Oates, spokesman for the Pacific Fleet Naval Air Forces, said Friday.

**Yeltsin replaces FSB chief:** Russian President Boris Yeltsin on Saturday dismissed the head of the Russian Secret Service (FSB), Nikolai Kovalyev. Interfax news agency cited Yeltsin's press department as saying, AFP reports from Moscow.

The FSB is the successor to the Soviet KGB. Kovalyev was replaced by Vladimir Putin, first deputy to the head of the presidential office. The reason for the dismissal was not immediately known.

**4 die in Ukraine aircraft crash:** A pilot and three other people on board a stunt plane which was on a training flight died Saturday when the aircraft crashed near Kharkov in eastern Ukraine, the Russian news agency Interfax reported, AFP says from Moscow.

An inquiry was opened into the cause of the crash, which occurred at Korotich airport, the agency added.

## Walt Disney to co-produce film on Di's life

LONDON, July 26: The Walt Disney company is to co-produce a film cartoon for children on the life of Diana, Princess of Wales, including the obligatory happy ending, the Sunday Times reported, reports AFP.

Not mentioning her death in a car crash in Paris last year, the film concludes with Diana skipping about with children in paradise, the paper said.

The 30-minute feature will refer to the problems of her marriage with the heir to the British throne, including her eating disorder bulimia and clashes with Queen Elizabeth.

But it will show her finding happiness in devoting herself to her children and to good causes, the Sunday Times said.

The cartoon will be produced by Disney in association with British company Siriol, with some funding coming from Scottish television. It will be shown in autumn next year on Britain's Channel Five television station and ABC in the United States.

The report quoted scriptwriter Nicholas Allan as saying: "Some people may think it is bad taste. But many more will not."

## Georgia, Abkhazia peace talks end without accord

GENEVA, July 26: Georgia and breakaway Abkhazia ended three days of UN-sponsored peace talks in Geneva on Saturday with no agreement to end one of the bloodiest post-Soviet conflicts, reports Reuters.

A United Nations statement said at the end of the negotiating session that the two sides were "far from agreement on key aspects of a settlement."

The negotiations were the first since fresh fighting in the Black Sea province in May, the worst since the end of the 1992-93 war which left the separatist Abkhaz with de facto but internationally unrecognised independence.

All efforts so far have failed to end the struggle for Abkhazia, a lush region of tea plantations and citrus groves between the Caucasus mountains and palm-lined Black Sea beaches which was a favourite holiday haunt of the Soviet communist elite.

Liviu Bota, the UN mediator and Secretary-General Kofi Annan's special envoy to the talks, said no breakthrough had been achieved although the negotiating process would continue.



A Thai police officer drives a roller to scrape seized illegal copied movies and CD in Bangkok, Saturday, Thailand, as one of the top ten countries recognised for the copycat products, has moved toward reforming its intellectual property practices. — AP/UNB photo

**Eritrean president in Tripoli:** Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki arrived in Libya overland Saturday to inquire about the health of Libyan Leader Moamar Gaddafi, who underwent hip surgery earlier this month, state television reported, AFP says from Tripoli.

Television showed Gaddafi, smiling and relaxed in a wheelchair, as he talked with the Eritrean leader. Afewerki was greeted at Tripoli airport, however, by the commander of Libya's armed forces, Colonel Abu Bakr Yunes Jaber, the television said.

**8 missing in Ukrainian ship blast:** Eight people were missing and presumed dead on Saturday after a Ukrainian boat fishing for spurs on the Black Sea landed a suspected World War two mine that then exploded, Russia's NTV television station said, Reuters says from Moscow.

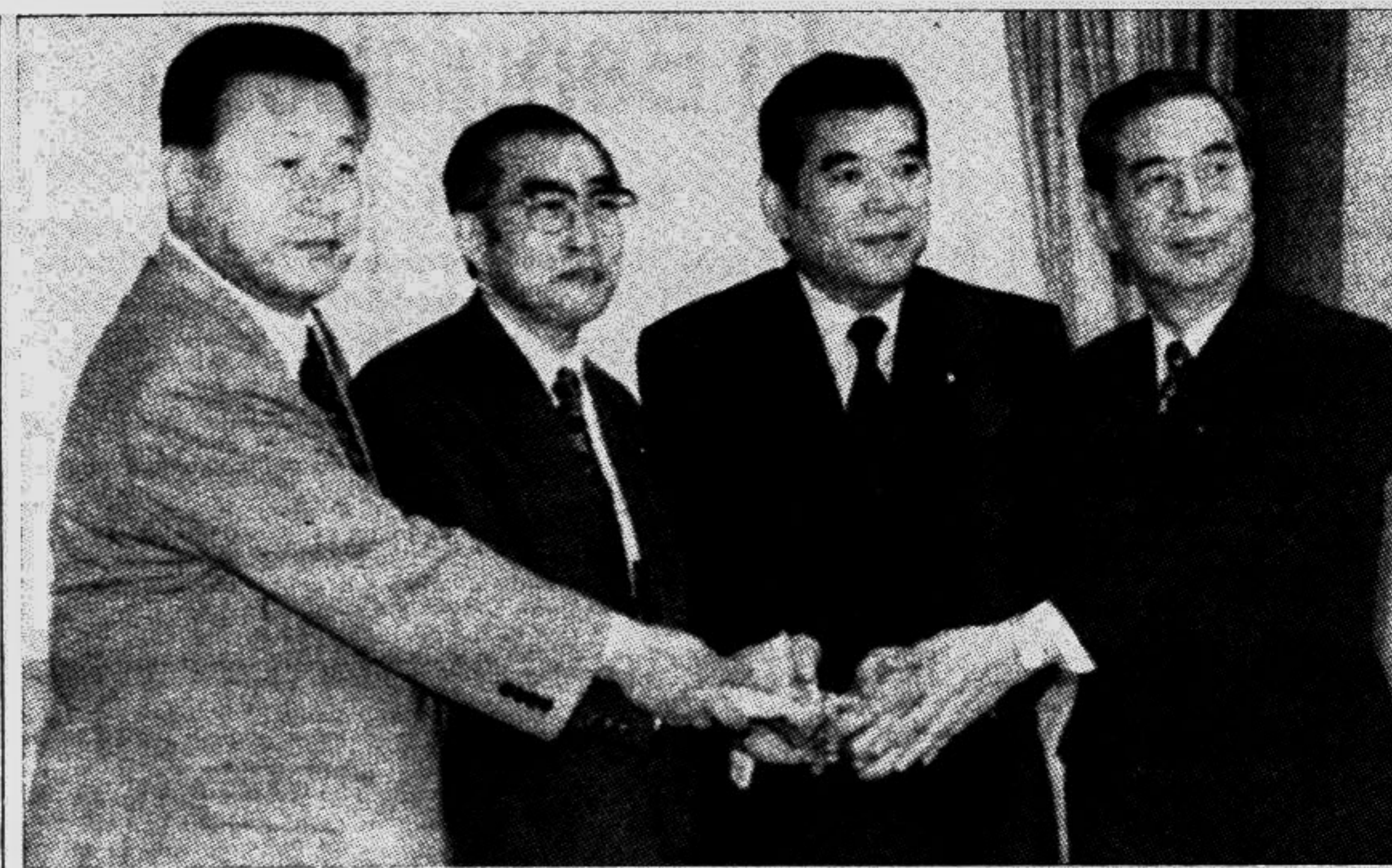
"There was an explosion and I was thrown overboard," the ninth member of the crew, Andrei Mozhaitsky, told NTV in Ukraine's Crimea port of Sevastopol.

**2 farmers rescued in Philippines:** Police troops rescued two abducted farmers after a brief firefight with suspected Muslim extremists in a southern Philippine mountain jungle, police said yesterday, AP says from Philippines.

The two farmers were handcuffed together and had their feet tied to a wooden post in a hut when found Saturday near Maluso town in the island province of Basilan, police chief superintendent Dominador Resos said.

**Polls begin in North Korea:** Polls opened across North Korea yesterday to form a new parliament, heralding the opening of a new era under reclusive leader Kim Jong-Il, South Korean monitors said, AFP says from Seoul.

Soldiers cast ballots in constituency 666 in the capital Pyongyang to elect Kim as a member of the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA), Seoul's official monitor, Naewoe Press, said.



Newly elected President of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Keizo Obuchi, second from left, joins hands with the LDP's top three executives at the first meeting at the party headquarters in Tokyo Saturday. From left: Secretary General Yoshio Mori, Obuchi, General Council Chairman Takashi Fukuya, and Policy Affairs Research Council Chairman Yuhikiko Ikeda. Foreign Minister Obuchi, 61, is expected to become Japan's prime minister in the upper house voting July 30 to replace outgoing Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto. — AP/UNB photo

## Tough days ahead for Japan's premier-designate

TOKYO, July 26: Keizo Obuchi officially takes over as Japan's prime minister this week, charged with rescuing the crippled economy despite an onslaught of fiery public criticism, reports AFP.

The 61-year-old foreign minister swept to victory in a ruling-party leadership vote that will make him premier Thursday, but as the least popular candidate for the job among the people he faces a formidable task.

While Obuchi may be one happy hombre with his victory, the Japanese people are disappointed to the point of disgust, said Johan Neuffer, senior research fellow at the Mitsui Marine Research Institute.

Even his own Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) is divided, with younger MPs fearing his unpopular ascension will lead them to defeat in lower house elections, due by 2000.

And one of the two losing premiership candidates, 72-year-old political veteran Seiroku Kajiyama, is now a loose cannon, setting up a splinter policy group of his supporters and declaring at the weekend "I am a free man now."

The LDP was scorned by the press for thumbing its nose at public opinion by choosing Obuchi, who leads the party's biggest faction.

He came first with 225 votes out of 411 valid ballots and the people's favourite, 56-year-old Health Minister Junichiro Koizumi, was last in third place with 84. Kajiyama got 102.

"Looking back at the long history of the Liberal Democratic Party, was any president born in this gloomy mood," the Asahi Shimbun asked at the weekend. "We do not feel like voicing congratulatory words."

The LDP was already limping after being humiliated in July 12 upper house elections, a drubbing that led Ryutaro Hashimoto to resign as party leader and premier.

After the election, the LDP is far short of a majority in the upper house although it maintains comfortable control over the lower house of parliament, or Diet.

"Even after the LDP got slaughtered in the July 12 upper house election, the party still

selected an old-guard lawmaker who stands for everything that is wrong and backward with this country's political system," said Neuffer.

All eyes now are on the cabinet that Obuchi picks and the key post will be the finance minister, charged with hauling Japan out of recession and rescuing the financial system.

Kajiyama had been the darling of the markets and speculation is rife that Obuchi, ever the consensus seeker, will ask him to take the finance minister's job. Whether Kajiyama would accept is debatable.

The premier-in-waiting faces three key changes, said Neuffer.

"First, he must somehow win over the hearts and minds of the Japanese electorate."

"Second, he must put his party back together after this week's bruising election."

"And third, he must strike up alliances with the opposition so that his party can pass a raft of bills in the coming Diet session designed to get the nation's flagging economy back on its feet."

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## Vajpayee admired by Indians for varied reasons

NEW DELHI, July 26: Politician, poet, orator, diplomat, bachelor, Indians admire Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee for different things, reports Reuters.

The septuagenarian leader who hit the button on India's nuclear tests to end a quarter century of restraint remains the moderate face of his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

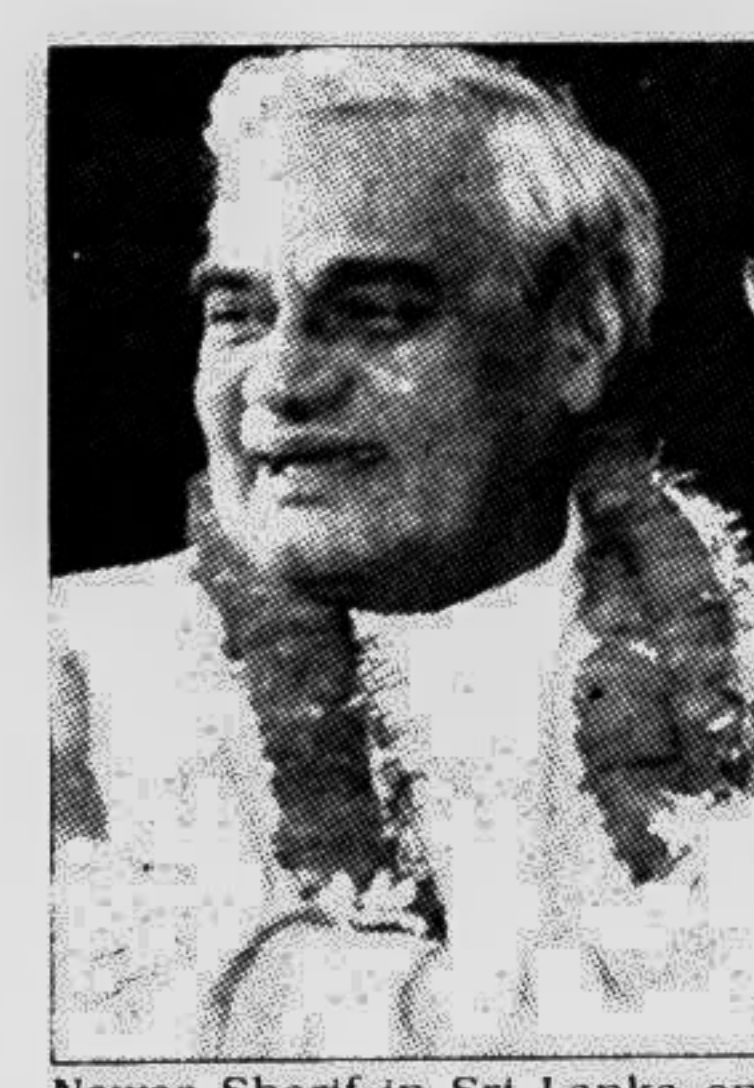
While some members of his party danced in the streets and sharpened their bellicose rhetoric after the underground blasts in May, Vajpayee pleaded for restraint and reached out to estranged neighbours Pakistan and China.

He will hold talks with Pakistan counterpart Nawaz Sharif on the sidelines of a regional summit on Colombo after this week. Host Sri Lanka said that nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan in May will not be on the agenda but could be discussed informally.

As the world closed ranks against India and Euphoria after the tests evaporated with Pakistan's tit-for-tat nuclear blasts, Indians looked of Vajpayee to show the way.

When he spoke in parliament, lawmakers-including his party's bitterest opponents - listened in hushed silence as he eloquently made the case for India's bold and defiant step.

The country will be looking to Vajpayee again when he meets Pakistani counterpart



Nawaz Sharif in Sri Lanka on Wednesday in a bid to defuse the tension western nations fear could unleash a new nuclear arms, race, or even conflict, on the subcontinent.

At home, Vajpayee has wrestled with the woes of running a disparate coalition. His government, patched together in mid-March after an inconclusive general election, has seemed shaky at the best of times.

The 71-year-old premier has often looked weary as coalition partners prod his administration on a host of regional issues, in the process fuelling speculation about the leadership prospects of his powerful, hardline Interior Minister, Lal

Krishna Advani.

Advani, who led the Hindu revivalist movement that catapulted him to power from relative obscurity in the early 1980s, has talked tough on Pakistan and the explosive dispute over the Himalayan region of Kashmir.

By contrast, Vajpayee has taken a more conciliatory line on several occasions since Japan and the west clobbered the two countries with economic sanctions for their nuclear tests.

"We can together tell the world that they must start universal nuclear disarmament," he said.

As foreign minister in a government formed in 1977 against the centrist Congress Party, Vajpayee eased visa rules to help Muslims in India and Pakistan visit their relatives across their troubled border.

More than a decade later, when the BJP led a vocal campaign to build a Hindu temple at a site disputed by Muslims in the northern town of Ayodhya, Vajpayee was seen as an odd moderate who went against the grain in speeches at party meetings.

Vajpayee looked on in 1992 as radicals close to the party razed a 16th-century mosque at the site, which many Hindus believe to be the birth place of the god-king Rama. The incident sparked nationwide riots in which more than 3,000 people died.

## Off the Record

### Mandela pays 60 cows for his bride

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa: President Nelson Mandela paid 60 cows for Graca Machel's hand in marriage, a Johannesburg newspaper reported, reports AP.

"Even if (the President) had paid a million cows for Graca, she is worth every bristle of hair and hoof," the Saturday Star quoted King Buyelekhaya Zwelibanzi, a senior member of Mandela's Tembu clan, as saying.

The king began negotiations in April.

The couple was married in a secret ceremony on July 18, Mandela's 80th birthday.

Mandela sent the cattle to Machel's home country, Mozambique, to seal kinship between the two families.



### Flogging to exorcise evil spirits

NEW DELHI: In the name of exorcising mentally ill patients of evil spirits, a controversial 'temple' in the western Indian state of Rajasthan flogs and chains those who care to seek the special treatment!

Apparently, there is such a heavy rush at this bizarre 'temple' in Mahandipur Balaji in the state that people have to apply in advance, sometimes having to wait a fortnight for their turn, a newspaper, quoting a temple official, has reported, reports IANS.

### Lewinsky case

## Clinton subpoenaed to testify before jury

WASHINGTON, July 26: Special prosecutor Kenneth Starr has subpoenaed President Bill Clinton to appear before a federal grand jury in a dramatic legal maneuver to compel his testimony in the Monica Lewinsky case, two government officials said Saturday, reports AP.

Presidential advisers, speaking on condition of anonymity, said it now appears likely that Clinton will provide testimony in some form but that he hoped to avoid a grand jury appearance where witnesses cannot be accompanied by counsel.

Attorneys are exploring options over the site and scope of any questioning.

Starr is investigating whether the President and Lewinsky, a former White House intern, lied under oath in Paula Jones' sexual harassment lawsuit against Clinton. Investigators also want to know whether the President and confidant Vernon Jordan encouraged Lewinsky to lie by trying to help her find a job and a lawyer.

Clinton and Jordan have denied any improprieties, and Clinton has denied having a sexual relationship with Lewinsky.

The move marks the first time Clinton has received a grand jury subpoena in the long-running Whitewater inquiry. His testimony was subpoenaed for the trials of White-water figures James McDougal, Herby Branscum Jr, and Robert M. Hill.

Clinton long ago promised the public with answers about his relationship with Lewinsky "sooner rather than later," but then immediately fell silent at his attorney's advice. Clinton has declined at least four requests from Starr to testify voluntarily but White House Press Secretary Mike McCurry acknowledged Friday that discussions were underway with Starr's office.

Though his lawyers are studying the constitutionality of a presidential subpoena, Clinton has decided for now to explore whether a compromise can be reached with Starr.

### Fernandes says

## Talbott-Jaswant talks moving on right track

NEW DELHI, July 26: Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes said Saturday there were encouraging signs for relations between India and the United States after India's nuclear tests in May, reports Xinhua.

The Press Trust of India (PTI) quoted Fernandes as saying that the fourth round of talks between New Delhi and Washington next month should lead to a thaw to the extent of accepting India as a nuclear weapon state and easing of sanctions imposed by the US.

On his way to New Delhi after reviewing security arrangements in Jammu and Kashmir, Fernandes told reporters that the ongoing dialogue between Indian Prime Minister's special envoy Jaswant Singh and Deputy Secretary of State Strob Talbott was moving in the right direction and there is softening of attitudes.

He said on board a special plane of the India Air Force that the next round of talks between Talbott and Singh in the second half of August in Washington should see a forward movement.

Talbott and Singh held two-day talks earlier without tangible results.

Asked what he meant by forward movement, Fernandes said this included acceptance of India's status of a nuclear weapon state and removal of

sanctions.

"We do not want anybody's confirmation about India's status. It is a question of acceptance of the reality," he added.

On the issue of Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), the defense minister said complexities are on the US side which has lot to do with the weaponization programme.

He said there are certain ideas on the US side which are not acceptance to India. He did not elaborate.

Asked if India would go ahead with test firing of a new version of intermediate range agni ballistic missile with an extended strike of over 2,500 kilometers, Fernandes said.

### 47 feared dead as boat capsizes off Tamil Nadu

NEW DELHI, July 26: At least 47 people were feared dead after their boat capsized off the coast of India's southern state of Tamil Nadu today, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported, says Reuters.

The news agency quoted police as saying that 52 people were travelling in the boat when it capsized near the Rameshwaram coast, some 312 miles from the state capital, Madras.