

Congolese volunteers line up and march in place Monday at the national football stadium in Kinshasa where they singed up for the People's Self-defence Force, a civilian army being set up to defend the capital against the rebellion. Congo president Laurent Kabila is arming civilians to resist aggressors he claims backed by neighbouring Rwanda and Uganda. — AP/UNB photo

New president of Ecuador takes over

QUITO, Ecuador, Aug 11: With Ecuadorean troops in a tense standoff with soldiers in neighbouring Peru, Jamil Mahuad began his presidency Tuesday looking for a peaceful solution to the longstanding conflict, reports AP.

In his inaugural speech to Congress Monday, the Harvard-educated lawyer offered to meet with Peru's president to negotiate a resolution to the border dispute.

"I call on President Alberto Fujimori to join us in a united, responsible and cooperative effort, thinking of the future of our peoples, to reach a peace," said Mahuad, wearing the yellow, blue and red presidential sash across his chest.

The standoff began last Thursday when Peru charged Ecuadorean troops had entered its territory in a disputed region where the countries fought a brief war in early 1995. Ecuador denied the charge.

Over 1000 Afghan nationals reinforce Taliban militia

ISLAMABAD, Aug 11: More than 1,000 Afghan nationals from big Islamic seminary in Pakistan have reinforced the Taliban militia following their capture of Mazar-e-Sharif in northern Afghanistan, a religious leader said, reports AFP.

Maulana Sami-ul-Haq, who heads Darul-Uloom Haqqania in the northwestern town of Akora Khattak, told AFP the Afghan students had been sent to Afghanistan following a request from Taliban chief Mullah Mohammad Omar.

"These soldiers of Islam left chanting slogans of bringing Islamic revolution" in Afghanistan after the fall of the key opposition stronghold, he said last Monday.

Haq, whose Madrasa or Islamic school is imparting religious education to some 2,500 Pakistani and Afghan students, told AFP hundreds more were preparing to go to Afghanistan in the coming days.

Ulemas (religious scholars) running hundreds of Islamic seminaries in the North West Frontier Province and south-western Baluchistan bordering Afghanistan had declared a two-week holiday on Omar's request to enable the students to join the Taliban struggle.

The Taliban need manpower for a Jihad (holy war) and to maintain law and order and run administration in a Afghanistan, he said.

Haq who is also chief of the religious political party Jamiat Ulema Pakistan (JUP) said the Afghans volunteered following a meeting between a Taliban delegation led by Omar's spokesman Maulvi Wakil Ahmed Mutawakil and heads of various religious schools in

Pakistan.

"They wished for strong young Afghans, in the age group of 20-25 years. The ones with no beard could not go despite their desire for Jihad," Haq said.

"We took the decision keeping in view the Taliban militia's need for an event of international importance," he said.

The students at Madrasa offered thanksgiving prayers over the Taliban victory in Mazar-e-Sharif.

The Taliban militia emerged from Islamic School in Pakistan two years ago and seized the Afghan capital Kabul in September 1996.

Holding more than two-thirds of the country, it is trying to seize control of territory held by the opposition alliance in northern Afghanistan, they have imposed strict Sharia laws calling it 'purist Islamic system.'

The mainly Sunni Muslim student militia denies charges of receiving training or military support from Pakistan.

Heads of many religious schools take pride that most of the Taliban government ministers and commanders are graduates from their institutions, terming them 'saviours of Islam.'

Sources said the militia chief Omar himself studied in a Madrasa of Baluchistan.

Taliban emerge after the failure of political leaders, they have the blessing of Allah, Mufti Nizam Uddin Shamzai, cleric of Karachi's Darul-Uloom Bannori Town said.

Shamzai described the Taliban as revolutionaries similar to those who brought revolution in France, China.

BRIEFLY

Jiang to visit Japan in Sept: President Jiang Zemin will visit Japan from September 6-11 becoming the first Chinese president ever to make a state visit to Tokyo, a Foreign Ministry official said Tuesday. AP reports from Tokyo.

Jiang's exact itinerary, however, was still being worked out, said the official, who works in the China section of Japan's Foreign Ministry. He asked that his name not be used. The dates for the visit were approved at a Cabinet meeting Tuesday morning, he said.

Indian actor Premji laid to rest: The mortal remains of Premji, one of the most celebrated actors of the Malayalam stage and silver screen, were laid to rest at a public cemetery in Vadakara in the Thrissur district as per his wish, according to his family sources. PTI reports from Thrissur.

A large number of admirers, including his relatives, have thronged to witness the funeral. Premji, a recipient of the national best actor Bharat Award, died at the age of 90 in a private hospital in the early hours yesterday following prolonged illness.

Arafat in South Africa: Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat arrived in South Africa for a state visit late Monday amid tight security. It is his first visit since South Africa and Arafat's autonomous government established diplomatic ties in 1995, AP reports from Cape Town.

During his three-day visit, Arafat is expected to brief President Nelson Mandela on the Middle East peace process and discuss relations with South Africa. Officials from the former ruling party of apartheid, the National Party, are scheduled to meet Arafat on Tuesday, said a party spokesman, Reiner Schoeman.

Lankan court frees journalist: A court freed a Sri Lankan journalist who was arrested by police three weeks ago for suspected links with the Tamil rebels, court officials said Tuesday, AP reports from Colombo.

Magistrate S. Kanapathipillai ordered P. Mannikavasagar's release Monday after police failed to bring any charges against him. He was detained under anti-terrorists laws, which empower police to detain a suspect for three weeks without formally charging him. Mannikavasagar works for a popular Tamil-language daily Virakesari, published from Colombo. Reuters and the British Broadcasting Corporation. He was not immediately available for comment.

Quake shakes Taiwan: A magnitude 6.3 earthquake rattled parts of Taiwan including the capital city on Tuesday, but no damage or injuries were reported, AP says from Taipei.

The Central Weather Bureau said the quake struck about 190 km off the coast of northeast Ilan County, and almost 80 km below the earth's surface late Monday morning. "Normally, an earthquake of 5.0 or above on the Richter scale would cause damage to buildings," said Lu Wen-hsi of the bureau's earthquake centre. "But since the epicentre was very far from Taipei, no damage was expected."

Call for peace before Pope's Mexico trip: The bishop of this mountain city in southern Chiapas state urged a solution to Mexico's Indian rebellion before January's visit of Pope John Paul II, AP reports from San Cristobal de Las Casas.

"If there isn't a more or less peaceful situation in the country, a visit by the Holy Father wouldn't be appropriate, because it could appear to be an approval of the lack of respect for human dignity," Ruiz said in an interview Sunday night.

However, Ruiz did not say the Pope should cancel his trip and said the visit provides a "remote but not non-existent" opportunity to resolve the uprising by the Zapatista National Liberation Army, a guerrilla group that demands greater rights for Mexico's poor Indians.

Woman jailed for 25 yrs in Peru: A Peruvian court on Monday sentenced a woman to 25 years in prison for her role in terrorist attacks carried out by the militant Maoist Shining Path organisation, AFP reports from Lima.

A special criminal court for terrorism cases in Lima found Cecilia Nunez Chipana, also known as "Comandante Ana," guilty of participating in numerous attacks.

2030 accidents in 19 German N-plants over 10 years!

BONN, Aug 11: Over the past 10 years, Germany's 19 nuclear power plants have suffered 2,030 accidents, the popular daily Bild reported today, citing a report to be presented to the government later in the day, reports AFP.

Bild said the report mentioned only those "incidents which must be notified by law."

International conventions on civilian nuclear power, compel signatories — 45 in all — to provide information every three years on the safety of their nuclear installations.

Of the incidents recorded in Germany, two were classified by the report as "category A", meaning they should have triggered an immediate alert due to a flagrant flaw in technical security.



Famous Russian cellist Mstislav Rostropovich performs a Bach suite on the cello on the stage of Moscow's conservatory's Great Hall during funeral of Alfred Schnittke, who lies in an open coffin below the stage, Monday. With musical performances and eulogies, Russia's musicians and other artists on Monday paid tribute to Alfred Schnittke, one of the greatest composers of this century, who died in Hamburg on August 3. — AP/UNB photo

Albright offers \$2m reward in embassy bombings 'US can't run away from terrorism'

WASHINGTON, Aug 11: US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright offered a 2 million dollar reward Monday in the US Embassy bombings. President Bill Clinton said America must not "start running away from this kind of conduct," reports AP.

With government authorities in Kenya and Tanzania pledging their cooperation in a joint investigation with FBI experts, posters were distributed worldwide offering the reward. Since 1991, 5 million dollars has been paid for critical information in other terrorist attacks.

"At the moment, I don't have any idea why they picked those two (embassies), Patrick Kennedy, assistant secretary of state for management, told reporters as the investigations got underway.

But the attacks appeared to be having a ripple effect. Kennedy said one dozen to two dozen threats were telephoned to US installations since the attacks last Friday.

While US officials declined to say whether there were any strong leads being pursued in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, a Kenyan guard who refused to let the bombers into the embassy grounds may be alive and hospitalized, James Foley, a State Department spokesman, said.

The guard, who had a grenade thrown at him, "resisted heroically," Foley said. "It's obviously a dramatic story."

The CIA disrupted plans by terrorists to bomb five US embassies last year. The Washington Post reported Tuesday, CIA Director George Tenet disclosed last year that two bombings were foiled in the late stages of planning. But the newspaper said three other bombings also were thwarted in plots that weren't as far along.

Meanwhile, rescue teams continue to pour in, eager to save victims of the US embassy bombing in Nairobi. But they fear there is no one left to save.

Investigators were also pouring into Nairobi and into Tanzania, where the US Embassy in Dar es Salaam was hit Friday by a nearly simultaneous blast.

The investigators were luckier. They have a witness to talk to: A Kenyan guard at the Nairobi embassy survived the bombing.

His picture was on the front page of the East African Standard Tuesday, along with an account of his confrontation with the bombers.

And in Tanzania, a dozen people, including Sudanese and Iraqis were detained. But US officials played down the importance of the roundup.

A total of 542 people were still in hospital, 24 of them in critical condition, he said.



An elderly woman is crying beside the body of her daughter Monday in Jiuzhou. She lost her family in recent massive floods and found the only body of her daughter. — AP/UNB photo

Congress demands resignation of L K Advani

NEW DELHI, Aug 11: Concerned over the sport in terrorist killings in Jammu region, the Congress yesterday demanded resignation of Home Minister L K Advani, reports PTI.

The demand was made by a three-member AICC team which visited Rajouri, Poonch and adjoining areas of Udhampur district which said the situation there was grim as there was a complete absence of coordination among the civil administration, the para military forces and army.

This has led to a situation where people have been left to their fate, the delegation members S S Surjewala, Venod Sharma and K M Khan — told reporters adding the resentment against the union government symbolised by the home minister was loud and clear among the people.



Private charity trust of Diana revealed

LONDON, Aug 11: Diana, Princess of Wales, ran a private charity which she used to make donations totalling hundreds of thousands of pounds to favoured causes, it was reported in the Times today, reports AFP.

The Princess of Wales Charities' Trust was set up in 1981 with a 100 pound (160 dollar) donation from the Princess, and latest accounts show it has funds of more than one million pounds (1.6 million dollars), according to the paper.

The Trust's existence was kept secret during her lifetime and financed from "fees" paid to her by organisations she represented or visited, or by their sponsors, the newspaper said.

The Times added that the charity's trustees have now written to Diana's sons, Prince William 16, and Prince Harry, 13, to ask them to become its patrons and to take over the work of vetting grants.

Govt blames UNITA for killings 145 killed in Angola

LUANDA, Aug 11: Unidentified assailants in Angola have killed 145 people, among them three Portuguese nationals, in several attacks over the weekend in the northern province of Malanje, local officials said on Monday, reports AFP.

A spokesman for the provincial governor issued a statement on local radio alleging that fighters of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) had carried out the raids.

He did not say if the killings were linked to a series of attacks by armed men on the town of Kambu-Kamama, in the same part of Malanje, which have left several dozen dead since Friday.

The Portuguese ambassador to Luanda, Ramalho Ortigo confirmed the death of the Portuguese nationals but refused to elaborate on the attack.

"All we know is that there was an attack and our citizens were killed," he said on local television.

Several sources and detained foreign democracy activists to be tried by Myanmar junta

YANGON, Aug 11: The 18 foreign democracy activists detained for handing out anti-government leaflets remained in the custody of the military regime Wednesday, their fate undecided, reports AP.

Two government officials denied reports that the ruling State Peace and Development Council had decided to charge the activists and put them on trial, saying no decision had been taken.

"The legal process is under way and it will be premature to give comment on the outcome at this moment," a spokesman said in a statement faxed to The Associated Press in Bangkok.

Off the Record

Aerobics classes at women's prison

NEW DELHI: An exclusive women's prison, coming up here, will have a range of facilities like kitchens cable television, washing machines, aerobics and vocational classes, so far unheard of in Indian jails, reports IANS.

The inmates would be allowed to cook meals of their choice in the kitchen equipped with modern crockery and cooking system. The visitors will get to meet the jail inmates in a tiny lobby.

The prison, exclusively for women, is coming up inside the premises of the country's maximum security Tihar jail in New Delhi. It is expected to be ready by October this year at a cost of Rs. 50 million (\$1.19 million).

The prison, with a capacity of 400 inmates, would also have a school for their children as well as a maternity ward. It would be an all-woman affair as even the officials and staff would be from the same gender.

The inmates would be given vocational training so that they can lead an independent and self-reliant life once released from the prison, said Inspector General of Prisons R.S. Gupta. "The sole purpose of all these provisions is to reform the women inmates of the jail, so that they can lead a normal life once released from the jail," Gupta told India Abroad News Service.

Broken promise!

MANILA: President Joseph Estrada of Philippines who vowed to quit what he called his last vice — cigarette smoking — when he became president, broke his pledge during a visit to the southern Philippines over the weekend, reports AP.

A photograph of Estrada puffing on a cigarette was printed on the front page of the nationally circulated Philippine Daily Inquirer in its Monday edition.

It said Estrada, who previously was vice president, was relaxing after a hearty lunch in Cotabato City when he took out a cigarette to smoke.

Dogs — not best friends for child workers

BANGKOK: Six girls who worked for years without pay caring for a millionaire's dogs, were rescued by police, officials said, reports AP.

The girls, including an illegal immigrant from neighbouring Myanmar, range in ages from 12 to 15 and were sent by their families to the home of the millionaire to work as servants in lieu of repaying various debts.

They bathed, brushed and walked the 30 dogs daily, the official said on condition of anonymity. The first floor of the house was given over to the dogs, who lived in air-conditioned rooms.

The girls had less luxurious accommodations, but there were no allegations of physical mistreatment. They told authorities that they were forbidden from going home until the debts were repaid. None had ever received wages and had been working at the house from one to seven years.

Annan urges Iraqis to cooperate with UN team of arms inspection

UNITED NATIONS, Aug 11: UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan sent a message Monday to the Iraqis asking them to exercise "common sense" and cooperate in a comprehensive review of weapons inspections and sanctions, reports AP.

Iraqi diplomats continued to insist that sanctions must be lifted before Iraq cooperates again with inspectors, but they also said they would welcome a Russian proposal to formally commend the Iraqis for fulfilling some Security Council demands.

In Lisbon, Portugal, where he is on an official visit, Annan told the state news agency Lusa that he was sending his special envoy to Iraq, Prakash Shah, with a message that the United Nations would treat the Iraqis with "fairness" — but that they needed to show "common sense."

Shah was due to leave from Lisbon on Tuesday.

Iraq has been under UN trade sanctions — which ban air travel and most sales of its economic mainstay, oil — since its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The UN Security Council has said that the sanction will not be lifted until inspectors certify that Iraq has eliminated its weapons of mass destruction, as called for in UN resolutions following the 1991 Gulf War.

Annan proposed a comprehensive review of the weapons inspections and the debilitating sanctions last week, after Iraq suspended its cooperation with the weapons inspectors on the grounds that they were working on behalf of the United States to prolong the sanctions.

The Security Council declared the suspension of cooperation "totally unacceptable."

That left the status of the inspections unclear, although regular monitoring via sensors and closed-circuit video continues. Australian Richard Butler, the UN's chief weapons inspector, has yet to order his staff out on inspections.

Iraq's Charge d'Affaires at the United Nations, Said Hasan, said the Iraqis believed the inspectors had a political agenda.

"They are not doing disarmament work," he said of the inspectors. "They are doing the

political work" of the United States.

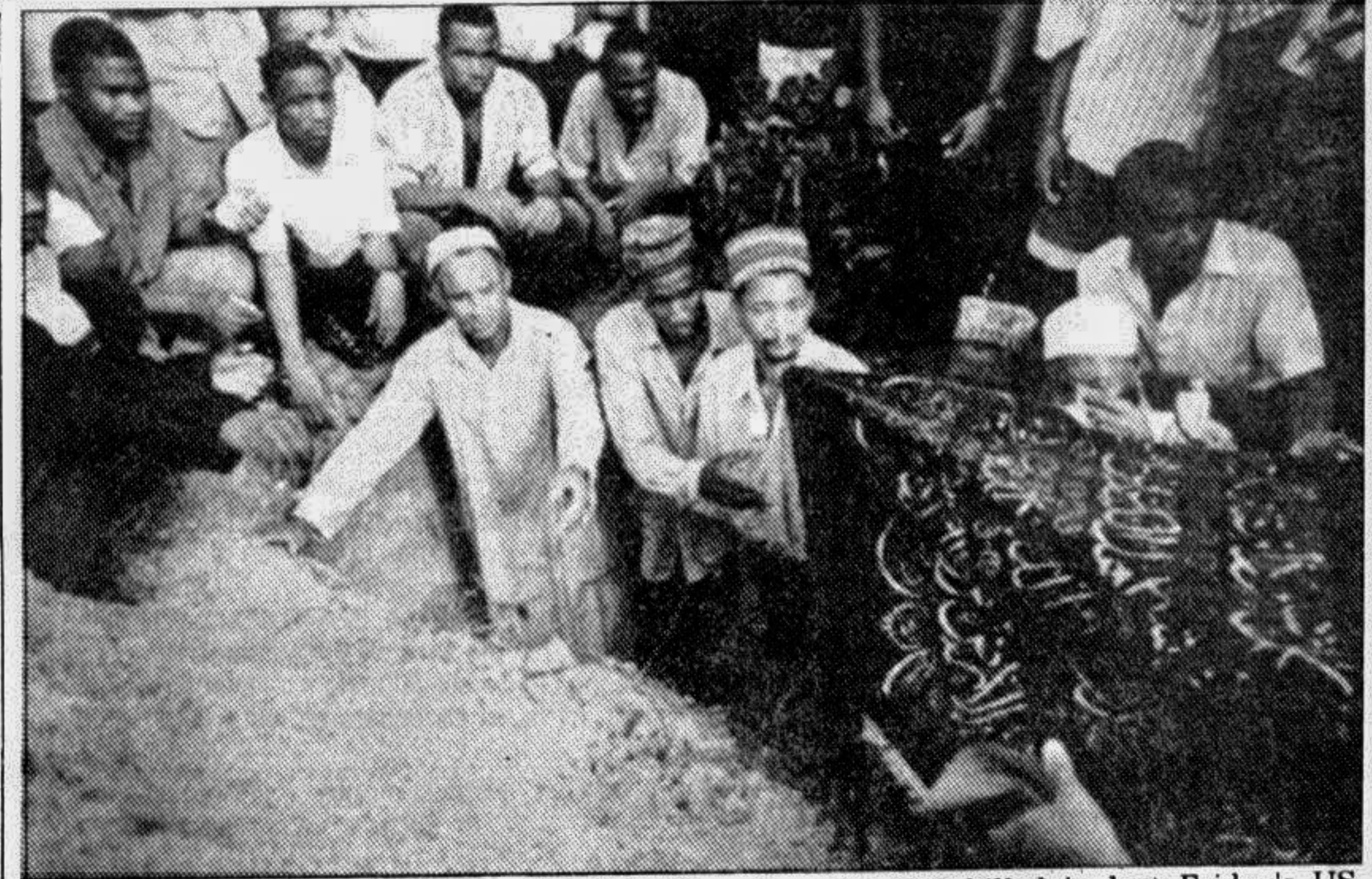
Hasan said Shah, an Indian, would be welcomed by Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi deputy prime minister who shut down inspections last week when Butler refused to certify that Iraq has destroyed all its weapons of mass destruction.

Annan, who has counted out lifting sanctions for now wants the review to show the Iraqis a "light at the end of the sanctions tunnel," but he has yet to explain how.

Russia's deputy ambassador, Yuriy Fedotov, has suggested that the Security Council formally commend Iraq for closing its nuclear file and nearly closing its missile file.

Hasan said Iraq would welcome such an initiative, although he would not say whether it would prompt Iraq to allow inspections to resume.

US and British diplomats — who have adopted a wait-and-see approach to Annan's message to Iraq — have dismissed similar proposals in the past, saying they would be rewarding Iraq for doing little.



The coffin containing the body of Bakari Nyumbu, who was killed in last Friday's US Embassy bombing while he was on duty as an embassy guard, is passed into a grave beneath a blanket inscribed with the Quranic writing, during a traditional Muslim burial ceremony in the Tandale suburb of the capital Dar es Salaam, Tanzania on Monday. United States medical examiners began releasing the bodies of the 10 Tanzanians killed to their families Monday. — AP/UNB photo