

### Suharto denies allegations of amassing money during his rule

**JAKARTA, Sept 7:** Former Indonesian president Suharto appeared on television on Sunday to deny allegations that he had amassed money during his 32 years in power and had stashed funds in foreign bank accounts, reports Reuters.

"There is no proof that I have put... money in foreign currencies," he said in a speech carried on the private TPI television channel, part-owned by his eldest daughter.

"If it is true, you can contact Indonesian ambassadors in any country concerned to help transfer the money back."

It was the first time Suharto had been seen on Indonesian television since he resigned on May 21 amid riots, mounting demands for his ouster and a raging economic crisis.

Suharto, who took power from late founding president Sukarno in the mid-1960s, has not been seen in public since his ouster except for appearances at Jumma prayers.

His 30-minute speech focused on denying allegations that he had diverted funds from wealthy charitable foundations to his heads.

## Heavy fighting continues in north of Kabul

**SAR-EKOTAL, Afghanistan, Sept 7:** Dawn broke Monday to the thunder of rocket fire and the roar of fighter jets pounding enemy positions on the front line, barely 20 km north of the war-ravaged capital of Kabul, reports AP.

Near the front line, Taliban soldiers said opposition troops launched a massive assault near Pul-e-Sufian, north of Kabul. For several hours both sides waged a blistering rocket duel. The sounds of battle reverberated throughout the capital city.

Residents awakened to the din.

"I woke up because of the rocket fire and I just sat up and listened with my head lying like this on the windowsill," said Mohammed Shafi, cradling his head in his arms.

At Sar-e-Kotal, a battle-worn Russian-made tank guarded the middle of the road, its gun barrel facing battle field several kilometers to the north.

The road winds past a wind-swept plain toward the hills, past a sprawling graveyard where brightly coloured flags marking hundreds of graves flutter in the breeze.

A scruffy bearded man with a Kalashnikov automatic rifle slung over his shoulder checked cars, hauling out passengers. He said he was looking for enemy infiltrators sent into Kabul by former military chief Ahmed Shah Massoud, now a leader of the northern alliance.

The man refused to identify himself, saying only that he was with the Security Ministry.

But farther down the road, other Taliban soldiers were willing to talk.

"We didn't launch the offensive, it was Massoud," said Ghulam Shah, a stocky Taliban soldier.

The only two major fighting forces still arrayed against the hard-line Taliban army are Massoud's troops, which control the area north to the Panjshir Valley, and Shiite Muslim soldiers of Hezb-e-Wahadat.

In August, the Taliban's opposition, largely led by Massoud, lost substantial ground. The Taliban army moved into the northern strongholds of Mazar-e-Sharif and swept through the northern provinces of Balkh, Samargan and Kunduz.

Only in recent days has the fighting returned to the northern edges of the capital as Massoud's soldiers try to force their Taliban opponents from positions in the foothills of the Hindu Kush mountains.

To the southwest of Kabul, another front has opened in recent weeks. This one between the Taliban and Shiite Muslims of Hezb-e-Wahadat, mainly Hazaras, named for the central region of Hazarajat where they originate.

The Taliban's top commanders have been assigned to both front lines. Jalaluddin Haqqani, whose headquarters in eastern Khost was attacked by US missiles on August 20, is making regular forays to the front line north of Kabul.

At his home in Kabul, Haqqani's fighters said he spent the previous night near Pul-e-Safian directing Taliban forces.

Shah, the Taliban soldier, said his comrades mounted a ground attack and pushed Massoud's soldiers out of a handful of outposts, but neither side made significant gains.

The number of casualties in the fighting was not known.

### Taliban promise to determine fate of Iranian diplomats

**TEHRAN, Sept 7:** The Taliban Islamic militia has promised Iran to determine the fate of 10 Iranian diplomats and a journalist missing in Afghanistan in one week, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said on Sunday, reports AFP.

The Taliban has promised to determine the situation of the diplomats in one week, ministry spokesman Mahmud Mohammadi told Kayhan newspaper.

"The Taliban is responsible for the fate of the diplomats".

Iran accuses the militia of taking the 11 hostage in a raid on the Iranian consulate in Mazari-e-Sharif, which the Taliban captured on August 8 from Iranian-backed opposition forces.

Taliban spokesman Wakil Ahmed Mutawakkil said Saturday there was a "strong possibility the diplomats and the correspondent of the official Iranian News Agency IRNA had been killed."

He said however, that the Taliban will come up with an answer on the fate of the Iranians.



Rescuers retrieve the body of a victim from the debris of a private house in Makhachkala on Saturday. A car bomb probably caused an explosion that killed at least 17 people, including two children, injured at least 100 people and gouged a five-meter (15-foot) crater in a street in the capital of restive southern Russian region.

—AP/UNB photo

### Kabila in Zimbabwe for talks

**VICTORIA FALLS, Zimbabwe, Sept 7:** Congo's President Laurent Kabila arrived in this northwestern Zimbabwean resort Sunday, putting to rest fears that he was seeking a cease-fire in Congo and the withdrawal of foreign troops, reports AP.

The talks, convened by Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe, were scheduled to formally begin on Monday.

Kabila has been trying to suppress a rebel insurrection since late July, but rebels now control a quarter of the vast mineral-rich central African country.

The rebels, who were not included at two previous summits over the past month, were also expected to attend. "Anybody involved in the Congo (who) can make a contribution to bring peace to the country is welcome to the Victoria Falls conference," Zimbabwe's Foreign Affairs Minister Stan Mudenge was quoted as saying by the South African Press Association.

Other leaders who arrived Sunday included Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, Rwandan President Pasteur Bizimungu, Mugabe, and Salim Ahmed Salim, secretary general of the Organisation of African Unity.

**'Impeachment of Clinton quite possible'**

**WASHINGTON, Sept 7:** Sen Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a leading democrat, on Sunday declared "a crisis of the regime," over the Monica Lewinsky sex and perjury scandal and said the impeachment of President Bill Clinton was possible, reports Reuters.

The senator from New York told ABC's "This Week" that Clinton's apology on Friday in Ireland did not go far enough and called on independent counsel Kenneth Starr to speed his report on the scandal to congress so lawmakers could get their review under way.

Asked whether there were grounds to ask Clinton to leave office, Moynihan said "I don't know how I would vote. I don't know whether two thirds of the senate would vote to impeach but it is possible."

He said perjury by the president would be an impeachable offence. The senator said lying to the American public might also be an impeachable offence but added, "It does not follow that the senate will vote for impeachment, however."

### Malaysia's ousted DPM's adopted brother arrested

**KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 7:** An adopted brother of Malaysia's ousted deputy prime minister has been taken away by police to an unknown place, the politician said, reports AP.

Anwar Ibrahim, who was fired as finance minister and deputy prime minister last week, said his adopted brother Sukma Dermawan was detained by police on Sunday.

"Four police personnel came and took him away. No communication so far," Anwar said.

Police on Monday confirmed the arrest of Sukma, who is a businessman, but would not say why he was being detained.

"If I am the problem to them then take me, do not harass my family, my staff or my supporters," Anwar said.

Despite the latest attempt to intimidate him, Anwar announced Sunday that he would begin a nationwide campaign this week for political reform in Malaysia.

Anwar had planned to begin the tour Saturday, but postponed it because of the arrest. His supporters said he feared arrest if he tried to campaign against Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, who has ruled Malaysia for 17 years.

Anwar believes his arrest is imminent. Police say they first want to complete their investigations into charges of sexual misconduct, abuse of power and leaking state secrets.

## BRIEFLY

**Jiang Zemin greets Kim Jong-Il:** Chinese president Jiang Zemin has sent North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il a telegram congratulating him on his re-election to the stalinist country's top military post, Xinhua news agency reported, Reuters says from Beijing.

Jiang sent a message after Saturday's election in North Korea saying he was "happy to learn" of Kim's re-election as chairman of the National Defence Commission, Xinhua said on Sunday.

**New PM takes over in Malta:** Malta's Nationalist Party leader Eddie Fenech Adami was sworn in as prime minister on Sunday, just hours after his party was declared winner of the general election on Saturday, Reuters reports from Malta.

Fenech Adami, 64, and a staunch pro-European, was prime minister for nine years until he was ousted by labour party leader Alfred Sant in 1996. Sant conceded defeat earlier on Sunday.

**Castro makes stopover in Brazil:** Cuban President Fidel Castro said he would use the Sunday stopover in Brazil to discuss the 'very bad' state of the world economy with Brazilian counterpart Fernando Henrique Cardoso, AP says from Brasilia.

Castro was stopping in Brasilia after attending a meeting of non-aligned country leaders in South Africa.

**Quake strikes South China sea:** An earthquake measuring 5.1 on the Richter Scale has struck in the South China sea, about 300-km west of Manila, the Chinese state seismology bureau reported yesterday, AFP says from Beijing.

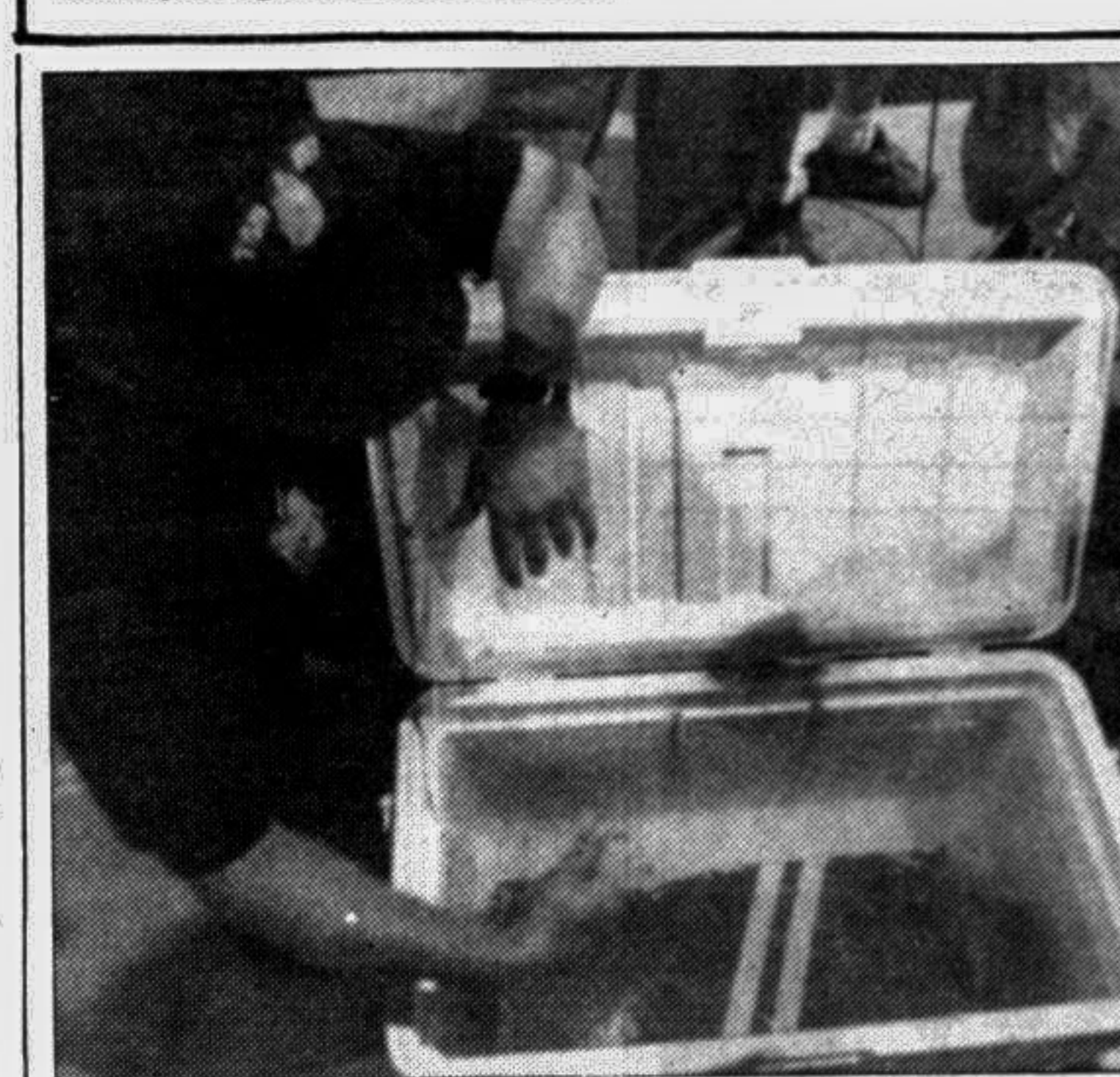
The tremor which occurred on Sunday at around 8:32 am (0032 GMT Saturday), was unlikely to be strong enough to set off tidal waves, a bureau official told AFP.

**7 die in SA road accident:** Seven people were killed and eight others injured in a road accident in Midrand, Johannesburg, Sunday evening, SABC TV reported, Xinhua says from Johannesburg.

The victims were soccer fans who had just watched a premier league match in Pretoria. Six died instantly and another died on the way to hospital.

**20 held for spying in Beirut:** More than 20 people have been arrested on suspicion of spying for Israel, a Beirut newspaper reported Sunday, AP says from Beirut.

The arrests followed a recent Lebanese army sweep of Beirut's southern suburbs, Ad Diyar newspaper said. The suspects allegedly were providing information to a Cyprus-based branch of Mossad, the Israeli intelligence service, the paper said, quoting unidentified sources.



Mike Poole, head of the flight recorder group at the Transportation Safety Board, talks about the Data Flight Recorder of Swissair Flight 111 as it sits in a cooler at a hangar at the Transportation Safety Board building in Ottawa on Sunday. —AP/UNB, photo

## 'Japan must bolster readiness to build missile defence system'

**TOKYO, Sept 7:** North Korea's rocket test last week is forcing Japan to study building a missile defence system and developing a satellite to monitor military activities, a governing party official said Monday, reports AP.

Takashi Fukaya, the Liberal Democratic party's general council chairman, said the North Korean launch serves as a reminder that Japan is vulnerable to attack and must bolster preparedness for a missile strike.

"Japan has been lucky to enjoy peace for over 50 years, but peace has been taken for granted, and this is an opportunity to remind ourselves it shouldn't be," Fukaya told reporters.

North Korea launched a rocket last Monday that sailed over Japan and crashed into the

Pacific Ocean. US and Japanese officials have called the firing a ballistic missile test, but the North claims it was a satellite launch.

The Japanese government apparently learned that the second stage of the projectile flew over Japan from the US military hours after it happened. That has prompted many Japanese to urge the government to develop its own monitoring satellite and a system to destroy incoming missiles in the sky before they reach their targets.

Fukaya said that developing a satellite merely for defence purposes may be difficult, but that Japan should study building one that would be able to monitor a variety of "situations and information."

He added that Japan would also need to assure other coun-

## Flood death toll rises to 1800 in India

**GUWAHATI, India, Sept 7:** The death toll in flooding in north and northeastern India climbed to almost 1,800 today, as officials in the state of Assam warned of economic disaster, reports AFP.

Latest figures released by state governments put the number of dead at 1,218 in Uttar Pradesh, 299 in Bihar, 150 in Assam and 130 in West Bengal.

Assam Chief Minister Prafulla Mahanta told AFP the worst floods in almost 60 years were threatening to push the state to the verge of bankruptcy.

These are the worst floods in Assam since 1950 and the state's agriculture has been washed away, Mahanta said.

"It is a huge loss to Assam and will be a major burden to the state's already precarious economic condition."

According to a state government flood bulletin issued on Monday, more than 800,000

hectares (two million acres) of rice fields and other cultivated land have been seriously damaged by flood waters from the Brahmaputra River.

Meanwhile, More than 90 people died in two floodhit Indian states on Sunday.

The Press Trust of India quoting an official spokesman said 33 people died in northern Uttar Pradesh in house collapses but added the situation in the state was "improving."

"Most of the rivers in the state have started receding" the spokesman said.

Uttar Pradesh which borders Nepal has accounted for most of the nationwide flood-related deaths. More than 1,000 deaths were reported from the state.

Nearly 60 million people have been affected by the current floods which followed the onset of the monsoon in early June.

## US set to begin new effort to ease Israel, PA standoff

**JERUSALEM, Sept 7:** With a new US diplomatic effort poised to begin, Israeli and Palestinian officials on Sunday suggested the possibility of a new round of meetings in Washington or even a three-way summit with President Bill Clinton, reports AP.

Negotiations on a further Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank have been stalled for 18 months, and Clinton vowed during a visit to Ireland last week that he would try to break the impasse.

A flurry of diplomatic activity appeared in the offing beginning with a visit, starting

Wednesday, of US Mideast envoy Dennis Ross. It is his first visit to the region since May.

With the Mideast leaders expected at the UN General Assembly later this month, Israel radio said the Clinton administration hoped to bring both Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Yasser Arafat to Washington — for either separate meetings or a three-way summit.

"Netanyahu has offered to meet Arafat for months now in hopes they can reach agreement on a second redeployment. Until now, Arafat has said no," said David Bar-Ilan, a top aide to the prime minister.

## Black box of Swissair Flight 111 recovered

**HALIFAX, Canada, Sept 7:** Canadian Navy divers recovered the flight data recorder from the crash site of Swissair Flight 111, investigators said here, as the coroner announced the bodies of the crash victims showed no evidence of burns, reports AFP.

Chief Investigator Vic Gerden said on Sunday divers had also found what may be pieces of the fuselage from the MD 11 jet that slammed into the Atlantic Ocean late Wednesday, killing all 229 people on board.

The plane crashed off the coast of Nova Scotia less than two hours after leaving New York en route to Geneva. The pilot had reported smoke in the cockpit and tried to make an emergency landing at Halifax.

The remains of the crash victims recovered from the ocean show no evidence of burns, chief coroner John Butt said Sunday. The victims died from the impact of the jet hitting the water, Butt said.

Butt spoke at a makeshift morgue at a military base near Halifax, where investigators struggled to identify the mangled remains of victims contained in some 60 body bags.

An unidentified baby was among the few more or less complete bodies fished out of the water, Butt said.

Earlier he announced the first positive identification of human remains. The victim was a black, French female passenger, he said, without giving the name.

At the request of the Canadian Transportation Safety Board, toxicologists were examining the victims' blood to determine whether there were traces of toxic gases in their bloodstream — which could have resulted from smoke in the cabin.

Divers found the airplane's "black box" on the rock-strewn ocean floor with just two meters (six feet) of visibility just before 5:00 pm (200 GMT) on Sunday.

## Off the Record

### Chris Patten to cook up storm on TV show

**HONG KONG:** After five years of serving this former British colony as its governor, Chris Patten will be serving roast chicken, souffle, and trout au bleu in a suit as a host for a gastronomic television documentary, reports AP.

The last colonial governor will present a documentary on the food and life of Elizabeth David, a British cookery writer who died in 1992, the Sunday Morning Post reported. It will be aired in Britain next year.

"Somebody told us Chris Patten was a bit of an Elizabeth David freak. We approached him with the idea of presenting the shows and he jumped at the chance," the show's producer Roy Ackerman of Diverse Productions was quoted as saying.

"He has told us he is ready to roll up his sleeves and is not averse to doing some of the cooking himself," Ackerman said.

Patten, whom Hong Kong media sometimes referred to as Fat Pang, plans to trim down before filming the show this fall, the Post said.

### Legalisation of cannabis?

**LONDON:** Experts from around the world met in London on Saturday to discuss how legalisation of cannabis might work in practice, reports AP.

The so-called First International Cannabis Congress "marks an historic turning point in the cannabis debate, with implications for drug policies around the globe," said Mike Goodman, director of Release, a British-based drug policy organisation that was co-host.

"We expect the debate to shift away from 'should it be decriminalised' to how cannabis should be regulated responsibly," he said.

"Opinion polls continue to show growing support for cannabis reform around the world," said Ethan Nadelmann, director of the Lindesmith Centre, a New York-based research institute that also was co-host of the one-day conference.

"The public is demanding legal access to cannabis for therapeutic and other responsible uses and we plan to advise them on how the drug can best be regulated," he said.

### All just to meet her husband!

**LAKE WORTH, Florida:** Loetta Fuller was desperate to visit her husband in jail. All she needed was a ride, reports AP.

So she jumped 12 kilometres to jail, where both she and her husband were behind bars Thursday, police said.

Since being arrested said the sheriff's spokeswoman Teri Barbera, they haven't seen each other.

### Lankan govt ready to hold talks with LTTE

**COLOMBO, Sept 7:** The government is prepared to resume peace talks with Tamil Tiger separatists, but wants first to guarantee wide autonomy to the provinces, including the one dominated by minority Tamils, a newspaper said Monday, reports AP.

The governing People's Alliance thus threw the ball back at the main opposition United National Party, which suggested last week that the government resume dialogue with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam rebels even while the fighting was on.

The People's Alliance, which has only a one-seat majority in 225-seat Parliament, needs the opposition's support to increase local autonomy by amending the constitution, which takes a two-thirds vote. The UNP has yet to take a clear stand on the autonomy proposal.

The Daily News quoted Constitutional Affairs Minister Lakshman Peiris as saying pushing through autonomy was needed to build trust before peace talks.

The LTTE, which has been fighting for a separate Tamil homeland since 1983, in a recent statement said it was not averse to a political solution.

"Once mutual confidence is brought about, discussions could be initiated with the intervention of a third party," rebel leader Thamilchelvan, who uses one name only, said in an interview with The Sunday Leader newspaper.

The government hopes to win over moderates among the country's 3.3 million Tamils with its autonomy offer, thereby forcing the rebels to accept the solution.

### Japan launches 68th ozone survey rocket

**TOKYO, Sept 7:** Japan on Monday successfully launched the 68th rocket in an almost 40-year-old programme to survey the Earth's ozone layer. Education Ministry official said, reports AP.

The MT135 rocket lifted from the Kagoshima Space centre in southwestern Japan at 11:00 am (0200 GMT), said Tsutomu Numata of the ministry's Research Institute Division.

Numata said a Japanese vessel later recovered the rocket's sensor payload, which splashed in waters about 50 kilometres southeast of the launching site.

The ministry plans to launch the same type of rocket from the space centre, located 985 kilometres southwest of Tokyo, on Tuesday, Numata said.

The rockets fly to an altitude of 56.7 kilometres before releasing a special ozone-measuring probe, which floats back down to the Pacific Ocean by parachute.

### Rwandan soldiers kill more than 100 Hutu rebels

**KIGALI, Sept 7:** Rwandan soldiers killed more than 100 Hutu extremists after a large crowd of the Hutus attacked the western village of Nyange, killing 3 school teachers, official sources said yesterday, reports AP.

"The assailants, who numbered almost 2,000, attacked the centre of Nyange and tried in vain to unlock the Kivumu (county) jail," the governmental Radio Rwanda reported.

"They then attacked the Nyange secondary school, where they killed three teachers and stole food supplies," the radio said, adding it did not have a complete count of victims.

Military sources on the ground however reported that there were far fewer than 200 rebels some local people had joined them armed with stones in their hands.

The clashes came two days after a rebellion launched Friday in Nyange, led by Hutus who set free at least 3,000 prisoners in Kivumu prison suspected of genocide.

## Hun Sen threatens arrests after grenade attack at his home

**PHNOM PENH, Sept 7:** A grenade attack at Cambodian strongman Hun Sen's house on Monday threatened to bring a violent end to weeks of political stalemate with Hun Sen accusing his rivals of a coup and menacing them with arrest, reports AP.

The tension-filled capital came alive with speculation that Hun Sen, who was not at home, staged the attack as an pretext to crack down on his opponents and protests against his continued rule.

"It's time to arrest the organisers of the demonstrations," Hun Sen said. "Anyone who has links or is associated with the demonstrations will be banned from leaving the country."

The main target of his wrath appeared to be opposition leader Sam Rainsy, whom Hun Sen branded a "terrorist."

Police said the grenades were thrown from one or two passing motorcycles over the gates of the house. No one was hurt. There were conflicting reports over whether Hun Sen's father or other family members were at home at the time.

There were no arrests, but Hok Lundy, the national police chief, lost no time in labelling the attack an "assassination attempt" and threatening opposition leaders with arrest.

The attack underscored the failure of three days of talks mediated by King Norodom Sihamoni to find a settlement between Hun Sen's party and the two main opposition groups over the outcome of the July 26 parliamentary elections.

Hun Sen broke off the talks in the northern city of Siem Reap and flew to the capital. Explosives teams cleared an

area around the Independence Monument, near his house, for his helicopter to land. Upon arrival, he went into a news conference.

Police were deployed in force patrolling a park opposite the National Assembly where round-the-clock anti-Hun Sen demonstrations by thousands of people entered their third week.

Hun Sen signalled that the attack marked the end of his patience and called it "the real nature of a coup d'etat."

Hun Sen deposed his co-prime minister, Prince Norodom Ranariddh, in a bloody coup last year. Ranariddh, the king's son, is the other main opposition leader.

"They called for soldiers, police to shoot me, to overthrow me."