

## International

US envoy warns Milosevic of NATO strikes

## Fighting continues in Kosovo despite call for truce: Annan

## BRIEFLY

**4 held for drug smuggling in Pakistan:** Pakistan Customs officials arrested four people, including three Italian nationals for smuggling fine-quality heroin powder out of the country at an airport in the eastern Punjab province, an official statement said yesterday. AP says from Islamabad.

The three Italian nationals, carrying more than 2 kg of heroin concealed in cavities of their suit cases, were arrested from the Lahore airport — the capital of Punjab province. The accused, who have not been identified, were going to India. In another case, a Pakistani Gul Agha was arrested with 8.5 kilograms (18.7 pounds) of heroin. He was booked on a flight for Tashkent and had hidden heroin powder in 44 embroidered vests.

**Ariane 4 launches European sats:** An Ariane 4 launched telecommunications satellites for a European and a Swedish firm overnight, the 111th mission by the European rocket, officials said yesterday. AP reports from Paris.

The Ariane blasted off at 7:51 pm (2251 GMT) Monday from Guiana Space Centre near Kourou, French Guiana, on the northeastern end of South America. Twenty-five minutes after the launch, the rocket placed in orbit a Eutelsat W2 for television and multimedia transmission over Europe, Africa and the Middle East over the next 12 years.

**Earthquake jolts Tibet county:** A strong earthquake jolted a sparsely populated county in Tibet, but there were no reports of casualties, a Chinese government seismologist and state-run media said yesterday. AP says from Beijing.

The quake with a preliminary magnitude of 5.2 struck Xainza county shortly before 6:30 pm (1030 GMT) Monday, the Xinhua News Agency reported. It was the second earthquake in six days to hit Xainza, about 300 km northwest of the Tibetan capital of Lhasa.

**Bus accident claims 34 in China:** A bus plunged into a creek in southern China, killing 34 passengers and seriously injuring eight others, the China News Service reported yesterday. AP says from Beijing.

The report said the bus brakes failed as it was negotiating sharp bends at high speed while going downhill through Zhenghe county in Fujian province on the way to Pucheng county.

**Vietnamese president in Thailand:** Vietnamese President Tran Duc Luong arrived yesterday for the first visit to Thailand by a Vietnamese head of state since the two countries established diplomatic ties in 1976. AP reports from Bangkok.

Luong was greeted by King Bhumibol Adulyadej at Bangkok's military airport. Later yesterday, he was to be given the key to the capital by Bangkok Governor Bhichit Rattakul and witness a signing ceremony for three agreements covering visas, legal cooperation and economic cooperation.

**Clinton to visit Japan, ROK in Nov:** President Bill Clinton will spend two days in Japan and two days in South Korea in November after attending an Asia Pacific Economic Conference in Malaysia, the White House announced on Monday. AP reports from Washington.

The Japan and Korea stops were added to Clinton's Asia travel schedule after he decided to drop plans to visit India and Pakistan. The White House last week said the president would not go to India and Pakistan until more progress is made in discussions about those countries' nuclear weapons programmes. Clinton will visit Japan on Nov. 19-20 and South Korea on November 21-22. White House Press Secretary Joe Lockhart said. No other details were available. Both of those countries have elected new leaders since Clinton last visited.

**Cohen to visit 6 Gulf nations:** Defence Secretary William Cohen will visit six Gulf nations to meet with US troops and discuss matters such as Iraq and Iran with local officials, a senior Pentagon official said on Monday. AP reports from Washington.

Cohen departs Wednesday for Bahrain. He also plans stops in Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia before returning to Washington on October 14, said an official who spoke on condition of anonymity. Both "long-term and near-term" matters would be under discussion, including Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's lack of compliance with UN resolutions, the official said.

**Quito placed on 'yellow alert':** Residents of Ecuador's capital Quito scrambled to buy gas masks and canned food on Monday after authorities warned that the nearby Guagua Pichincha volcano showed signs of erupting. AP reports from Quito.

Despite the panicky buying, authorities said the highland capital of 1.4 million inhabitants was not in danger from lava. If the volcano erupts, Quito could be showered by less-deadly ashes, they said. Quito authorities have declared a "yellow alert," and warned residents to be vigilant in the coming "weeks or months." Guagua Pichincha is 12 km from Quito and is hidden behind the famed Pichincha volcano, which overlooks the city.

**Jiang to visit Australia in '99:** China's President Jiang Zemin will make a landmark visit to Australia in 1999, in a further sign of thawing in the relations between the two countries, Australian Associated Press reported on Tuesday. AP says from Sydney.

The decision to accept a long-standing invitation will make President Jiang the most senior member of the Chinese Communist leadership to ever journey to Australia. Confirmation of next year's visit by China's most senior leader came Tuesday as the country congratulated Prime Minister John Howard on his victory in Saturday's election, the Australian domestic news agency reported from Beijing.

**E Timorese protest NZ-Jakarta links:** A contract to refurbish two old Indonesian Air Force Skyhawk training aircraft has angered the East Timor Independence Committee which opposes military links with Indonesia. AP reports from Wellington.

The two-seater aircraft are being refitted by Blenheim-based Air New Zealand subsidiary Safe Air at a cost of several million dollars each. Safe Air general manager Des Ashton said on Tuesday. East Timor Independence Committee spokeswoman Maire Leadbeater has protested to the New Zealand government, saying "New Zealand now compounds the evil of its ongoing military training role with the Indonesian armed forces by becoming an arms exporter."

**Hurricane Georges death toll now 150:** Searchers recovered more bodies over the weekend from tons of gravel deposited by storm flooding in a southeastern Haitian town, pushing the national death toll from Hurricane Georges past 150, officials said on Monday. AP reports from Port-au-Prince.

Seventeen bodies were recovered in Fonds Verrettes, a mountain town 80-km east of Port-au-Prince, bringing the town's death toll to 102, said Rep. Francois Sanozier, who represents the area.

Earlier, officials said at least 85 people were killed in Fonds Verrettes, population 27,000. The nationwide death toll of at least 150 people was released before the 17 new victims of the September 23 floods were recovered.



Debris-covered automobiles are strewn along the Missouri side of State Line Road in Kansas City, Mo on Monday after a night of flash floods. Five people have died from the flooding that hit the metropolitan area. — AP/UNB photo

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 6: Despite a UN resolution demanding a ceasefire in Kosovo and the withdrawal of Yugoslav police units from the province, Serbian forces intensified attacks on Kosovo's ethnic Albanians in the last few weeks, the UN chief says.

In his widely anticipated report to the Security Council, Secretary-General Kofi Annan listed apparent violations of a September 23 resolution but said he couldn't give an independent assessment of whether Serbian forces had complied with the council's demands.

That responsibility, he said, falls to the council's 15 members, who will take up the report Tuesday.

NATO countries had been awaiting the UN chief's report to determine whether to use military force to stop the offensive against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.

Despite Annan's unwillingness to declare Serb non-compliance, NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana and the United States said there was sufficient evidence in the report that the Serb special police units were still active and an estimated 275,000 Albanian refugees hadn't been allowed to return to their homes.

In its September 23 resolution, the council demanded an immediate end to the fighting that has left hundreds of people — mostly ethnic Albanian civilians — dead and uprooted tens of thousands since a Serb crackdown began in February. Most ethnic Albanians want independence for the province, which is 90 per cent ethnic Albanian. Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic stripped Kosovo's autonomy in 1989.

In its resolution, the council demanded Milosevic withdraw his special forces from the province and allow for the safe return of refugees and for humanitarian access to them. It demanded both sides work toward finding a political solution and threatened unspecified action if both sides failed to comply with the entire resolution.

In Monday's report, Annan reported that in the week following the resolution, government security forces "intensified their operations launching another offensive in the Drenica region," and elsewhere.

Fighting continued on September 28-29 despite the Serb prime minister's statement that Serb operations had ended and peace reigned in

Kosovo, Annan said.

As a result, another 20,000 people were reportedly displaced, he said.

While fighting began to wind down in the last days of September, with troops returning to their barracks and a limited number of police units being withdrawn, the United Nations has received information "that the government's armed presence remains significant and that the operations of the special police continue," Annan wrote.

Russian Ambassador Sergey Lavrov said Moscow agreed with most of Annan's observations but said Moscow wanted updated information about an apparent easing of the military offensive over the weekend. "We understand things have been moving and in the right direction," he said.

Meanwhile, President Slobodan Milosevic has denounced NATO threats of airstrikes as a "criminal act" after a senior American envoy issued a personal warning to halt his crackdown in Kosovo province or face military attack.

After meeting with Milose-

vic, US envoy Richard Holbrooke flew to Kosovo's capital Pristina on Tuesday to meet with international observers and ethnic Albanian leaders. But chances for a diplomatic solution to avert airstrikes appeared limited.

Milosevic told Holbrooke late Monday that his government is willing to seek a "political solution" to the seven-month crisis in Kosovo, where ethnic Albanian rebels are battling for independence.

But he also said that "threats of aggression... are a criminal act" that provide "support for the Albanian villains, not the Albanian people," according to a statement broadcast by television.

Holbrooke met with Milosevic for several hours late Monday, telling the Yugoslav president of the "grave situation we are facing."

The military planning is going forward on a serious, intense and sustained basis as we talk," Holbrooke told reporters after the meeting.

Milosevic and his government appeared defiant. State television said the Yugoslav leader told Holbrooke that "a

political solution is the only possible solution" and expressed hope "that the international community will finally contribute to reviving the political process instead of issuing threats."

**Russia to use veto to stop airstrikes**

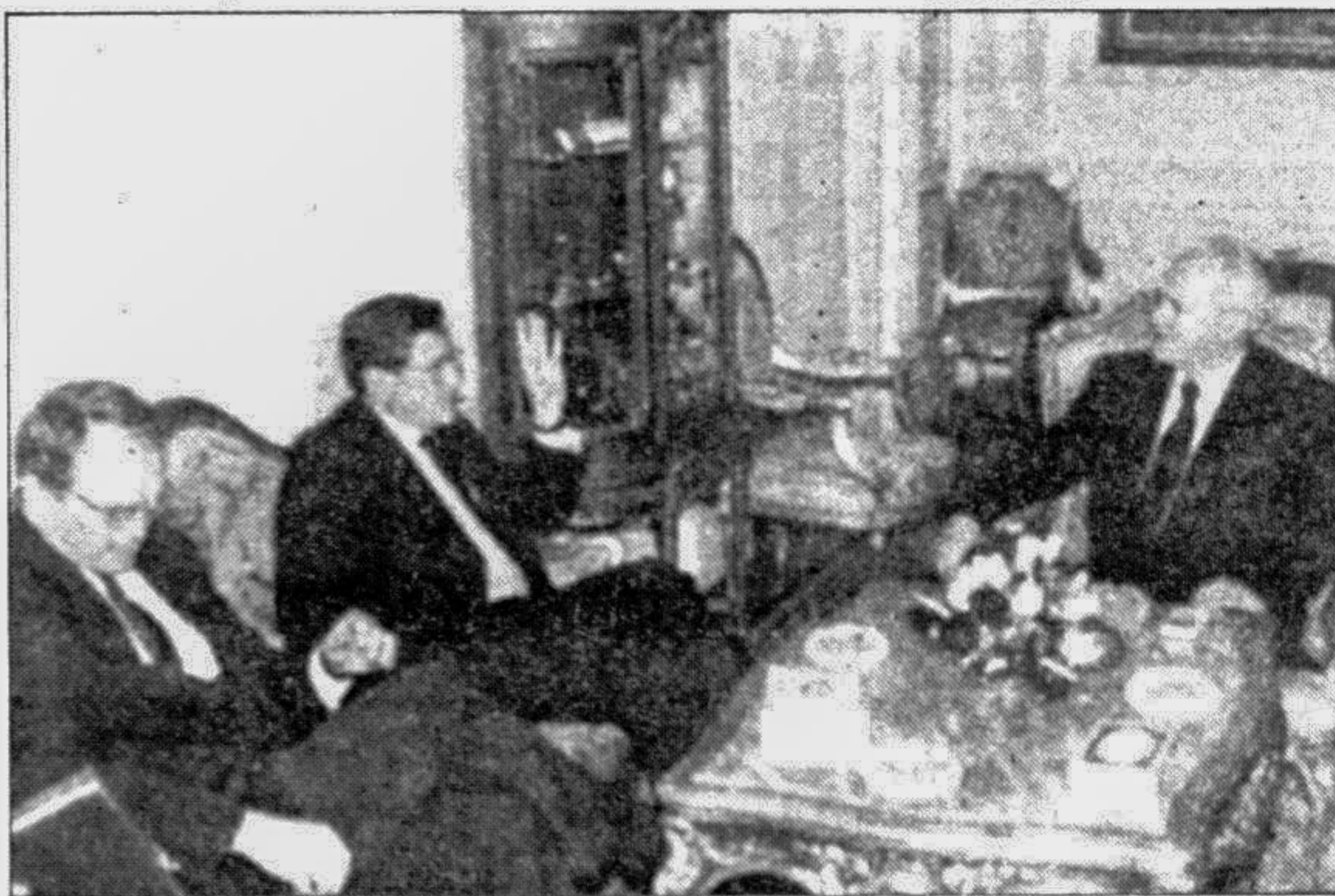
Russia is willing to use its veto in the UN Security Council to stop possible NATO airstrikes against Yugoslavia, the foreign minister said on Tuesday.

"Use of force won't help normalise the situation, it'll do just the opposite," Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov warned in an interview with the Interfax news agency.

President Boris Yeltsin, meanwhile, continued to press for a political solution to the crisis in Kosovo, the ethnic Albanian-majority province in southern Yugoslavia.

"I have spent almost two days preparing and holding telephone talks on Kosovo," Yeltsin told Russian news agencies.

The Russian leader has spoken with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan.



US envoy Richard Holbrooke, centre, US negotiator in the Kosovo conflict, ambassador Christopher Hill, left, and Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, right, during their meeting in Belgrade on Monday. The US delegation arrived to warn Milosevic of the extreme gravity of the situation in Kosovo and the possibility of NATO airstrikes if Milosevic fails to comply with demands to halt his crackdown. — AP/UNB photo

**Indian govt terms reports on Saudi millionaire as 'speculative'**

NEW DELHI, Oct 6: Government yesterday termed as "speculative" reports that Saudi millionaire Osama Bin Laden had directed Arab terrorists to gather in Jammu and Kashmir to create terror there even as Congress and other parties asked the entire to frustrate his designs, reports PTI.

"The report is speculative. I don't want to comment on it," an external ministry spokesman told newsmen here.

Congress described as "highly disturbing" British media reports that Laden has asked Afghan and Arab terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir for a major offensive against Indian security forces.

Party spokesperson Girija Vyas said Pakistan must desist from indulging in subversive activities in India and advised Islamabad to initiate a "constructive dialogue" as agreed upon recently between the prime ministers of the two countries.

**Cardoso wins polls in Brazil**

RIO DE JANEIRO, Oct 6: Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso won widely anticipated reelection according to partial results on Monday, in a vote hailed as a strong mandate for his plan to battle growing economic turmoil, reports AP.

With 58 per cent of ballots counted, Cardoso was far ahead with 50.87 per cent compared with 34.39 per cent for his main rival, left-wing coalition leader Luiz Inacio "Lula" da Silva.

Cardoso's victory was hailed domestically and abroad as a vote for economic reform seen as essential to prevent financial crisis from crushing Brazil and spreading to the rest of Latin America.

But it failed to reassure the international financial community or boost confidence in domestic markets.

**Philippine SC acquits Imelda of graft charges**

MANILA, Oct 6: The Philippine Supreme Court acquitted former first lady Imelda Marcos of corruption on Tuesday, saying her from a 12-year jail term and overturning the only case in which she had been found guilty of graft during her late husband's strong-arm rule, reports AP.

The court ruled 8-5, with one judge abstaining to acquit the widow of former President Ferdinand Marcos.

An aide said Mrs. Marcos, who has been free on bail, received a telephone call informing her of her acquittal.

## White House lawyers accuse Starr of making misleading argument

WASHINGTON, Oct 6: White House lawyers accused Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr of making a misleading argument last summer in battling the White House's claims that deputy counsel Bruce Lindsey should not have to answer all grand jury questions in the Monica Lewinsky matter, reports AP.

The White House lawyers made the accusation in a petition to the Supreme Court asking that the high court hear a White House appeal of a July 27 court decision on the use of attorney-client privilege.

On another front, President Bill Clinton's private lawyer, David Kendall, on Monday questioned whether Starr's submission to the Justice Department last January seeking to investigate the Lewinsky matter was "complete and truthful."

Kendall urged Attorney General Janet Reno to make the submission public.

Kendall pointed to recent disclosures that a partner in Starr's law firms was "involved in counselling Linda Tripp," who then took her secret tape recordings of an alleged presidential affair to Starr's office, triggering the Lewinsky probe.

The concealment of a role by Starr's law partner "to steer Mrs Tripp to Starr's office

raises questions about the veracity" of Starr's "disclosures to you and to the Congress," Kendall wrote.

In response, Starr issued a statement Monday night saying that Kendall's letter to Reno was "notable for its lengthy attacks on the conduct of persons outside the Office of the Independent Counsel and the absence of any connection between those actions and those of members of this office." He said the conduct of his office in dealing with the Justice Department was "professional, responsible and forthright."

Starr said it was important to note that the Justice Department expanded the jurisdiction of his office, and did not refer the Lewinsky matter as "related" to his other inquiries.

"Under the expansion provision of the independent counsel statute, the only relevant question was whether there was information regarding Ms Lewinsky and the president that warranted the appointment of an independent counsel," he said.

"That standard," he said, "was abundantly satisfied."

In its petition to the Supreme Court, the White House noted that Starr's office argued in June that the threat of impeachment was "too remote" even to be considered by the US Court of Appeals for the District

of Columbia when it was hearing arguments on the use of attorney-client privilege, White House attorney Charles F C Ruff wrote.

Yet three days later, Starr secretly declared in a court filing his intention to submit a report to Congress that included charges of impeachable offenses, Ruff said.

"That threat... was — unbeknownst to the court of appeals and the White House — in fact all too real" at that very moment, Ruff wrote.

"To our knowledge, the OIC never sought to correct the record in the court of appeals," Ruff added. "Nor, in its brief in this court, has the OIC explained why it made such a representation."

The White House contends that Lindsey should not have to testify about his conversations with Clinton because he is the president's deputy counsel.

"Attorney-client privilege is a bedrock principle of our system of justice," Ruff said in a brief statement announcing the White House petition to the Supreme Court. "The confidentiality of discussions between a president and his counsel about official matters is in the public interest, because the American people benefit when their president makes sound decisions on the basis of frank advice."

## Albright in Israel to prepare ground for ME peace summit

JERUSALEM, Oct 6: US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright arrived in Israel early today to prepare a Middle East peace summit scheduled for mid-October, reports AFP.

She was due to meet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem before heading to Jericho to see Palestinian Leader Yasser Arafat. Talks with Israeli Labour opposition leader Ehud Barak were scheduled for late today and a courtesy call on Israeli President Ezer Weizman on Wednesday.

Talking to journalists accompanying her on her flight from Washington, Albright said "there is an increasing sense of urgency" following more than 18 months of paralysis in the peace process.

Meetings with Netanyahu and Arafat in New York last month, which were followed by a short summit with US President Bill Clinton, had created a new momentum she said, and she wanted to build on it.

"I will try to get as much done as possible, push the process forward so that we can bring a conclusion," Albright said, but she added, "the US can do a great deal but the leaders must be willing to make the decisions."

Earlier State Department spokesman James Rubin said Albright hoped her visit would "narrow the number of issues that need to be resolved" in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

Rubin added: "Some of the underbrush needs to be cleared, so that it is possible to finish all the interim issues mid-October." Those issues, which should have been agreed months ago according to the timetable of the Oslo peace agreement, include defining the scale of the Israeli army withdrawal from the West Bank and the construction of a new port and an airport in Gaza.

A new summit hosted by Clinton is scheduled to take place on October 15-19.

Rubin said: "The mid-October summit will be a multiday intensive session in one location, with minimum access for the press."

Washington hopes the summit will seal an agreement between Israel and the Palestinians on an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank that would allow the sides to move on to negotiations on a final peace settlement.

Netanyahu and Arafat have officially agreed to adopt the 10 plus three format for the Israeli withdrawal: In other words, a withdrawal from 13 per cent of the West Bank with three per cent of this land being turned into a nature reserve where Palestinian prerogatives would be limited.

Even if the summit is successful it will leave the most difficult issue of whether the Palestinians will have an independent state and who will control Jerusalem.

## Another Anwar ally released Malaysia's ruling party begins choosing new DPM

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 6: The leaders of Malaysia's ruling party met Tuesday to discuss a replacement for ousted deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim, who faces trial next month in a case that will test the country's legal system, reports AP.

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, 72, said last week he could "drop dead" at any time. But because of the large number of candidates for the deputy's job within the ruling United Malays National Organisation, a decision was not expected quickly.

The party leaders, who have been conducting a national campaign to explain to Malaysians why the popular Anwar was fired on September 2 will also confer on what to do now that the High Court judge has banned all comments on Anwar's guilt or innocence.

The ruling coalition had scheduled a giant rally in the capital Saturday, aimed at drawing in the youth to whom

Anwar's campaign of reform has the most appeal.

Mahathir, who had heart bypass surgery in 1989, had groomed Anwar, 51, as his successor. But he fired his protégé from his posts as deputy prime minister and finance minister on grounds he was morally unfit to lead. The two had differed over economic policy and Anwar has said Mahathir feared he was a threat to his 17-year rule.

Meanwhile, police released an ally of dissident leader Anwar Ibrahim from jail on Tuesday, reducing to five the number of his associates still detained without trial, the national news agency reported.

Asmaon Ismail, an assemblyman in the state of Johor, was one of 17 Anwar associates and leaders of opposition parties rounded up as national security risks after Anwar led rallies nationwide calling for Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's resignation and political reforms.

## Off the Record

## Cyber-nuptials

SINGAPORE: Ancient traditions and state-of-the-art technology mixed as 14 Singaporean couples exchanged vows on the Internet on the last day of the Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival, an auspicious day for weddings, reports AP.

Monday's cyber-nuptials were held to promote the use of the Internet. Singaporeans are already being urged to use it for everything from matchmaking and filing lawsuits to ordering taxis and submitting tax forms.

For Patrick Ho, 30-year-old manager, the event was an opportunity to show the world how much he loved his bride, The Straits Times reported on Tuesday.

"I want to share this special day with friends, family and even strangers," Ho was quoted as saying.

For his bride, Ho Sau Mei, 27, a cyber wedding was an exciting way of sharing the ceremony with her relatives who have logged onto to the Internet in neighbouring Malaysia.

## Toddler orator for Indian politics

NEW DELHI: Sitting on a pile of cushions, Sadhna Bharti toys with the heavy garlands around her neck while cameras click away. The four-year-old has just finished delivering a long-winded speech extolling the need for efficient and corruption-free governance. Perched atop a table Bharti had begun with a religious chant and went on to speak for a good 15 minutes, exhorting the country's youth to work for the nation's development.

Bharti has a gift of memory that enables her to deliver scripted speeches for as long as half-an-hour, reports IANS.

Though she does not understand what she says, Bharti, who loves to play with toys quite like her peers, can belt out difficult words with remarkable ease. The child, who can speak like a seasoned politician, has been deputised by a political party, the Rashtriya Mukti Morcha (RMM) or National Liberation Front, to deliver campaign speeches for its candidates in the run-up to local elections in Delhi and the central Indian states of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

## Annan proposes 'comprehensive review' of Iraq's compliance

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 6: The UN chief has outlined his proposal for a "comprehensive review" of Iraq's compliance with UN resolutions, suggesting it now be up to UN arms inspectors to prove that Iraq hasn't completely disarmed itself, reports AP.

If accepted by the Security Council, Secretary-General Kofi Annan's recommendation would represent a major shift in the way UN arms experts have worked for the past seven years. The proposal, presented on Monday night, puts the onus on the inspectors to produce evidence that Iraq still has weapons of mass destruction.

Previously, Iraq had to provide evidence of cooperation. Inspectors have told the council that while they haven't found evidence that Iraq still has such weapons, they can't be sure that the evidence doesn't exist.

That argument, boosted by charges that Iraq had developed an advanced concealment programme to keep evidence from inspectors, has been sufficient for the council to agree to keep sanctions on Iraq, depriving it of its most valuable commodity, oil.

It wasn't clear if the council would go along with Annan's

proposal. Other elements of the plan could be troubling, such as his asking the council — not inspectors — to make a final list of what Iraq needs to do to have sanctions lifted and stating when that day might come.

In outlining its position on Monday, the United States flatly objected to any "pre-terminated outcome" of a review.

## Sharif says Gulf newspaper comments were misinterpreted

ISLAMABAD, Oct 6: Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif denied Monday having told a Gulf newspaper that his meeting in New York last month with Indian counterpart Atal Behari Vajpayee had not brought any progress, reports AP.

A spokesman for Sharif said the reported remarks to the Khaleej Times, published after the two leaders met in September on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, related to their July meeting in Colombo during the SAARC summit.



President Clinton is applauded by Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle, D-SD, House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt, D-Mo., and Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi, D-Cal., during a fundraiser in Washington on Monday. Earlier in the day the House Judiciary Committee voted 21-16 to recommend an impeachment inquiry to the full Congress. — AP/UNB photo