

# Indo-Pak officials to begin talks in Delhi tomorrow

NEW DELHI, Nov 3: Indian and Pakistani officials begin nine days of talks here on Thursday amid heightened tensions over a strategic glacier in the disputed Himalayan state of Kashmir, reports AFP.

Indian and Pakistani troops have reportedly clashed several times in recent weeks over the 24,000-foot (7,272-meter) Siachen Glacier, the world's highest battlefield and a source of friction for 14 years.

Indian officials say the sporadic clashes have left nine Pakistani soldiers and an Indian Army officer dead, while Pakistan has denied the incidents ever took place.

Siachen will be the media focus for the upcoming talks, and India's outspoken Defence Minister George Fernandes has described the stepped-up Pakistani operations on the glacier as a negotiating ploy.

"Pakistan has been trying to capture some areas in Siachen to tilt (the talks) in its favour," Fernandes said, but added that the skirmishes would not have "much affect" on the bilateral dialogue.

A Pakistani official, meanwhile, blamed India for the persisting tensions.

"India is not willing to create a sense of hope," Foreign Office spokesman Tariq Altaf said

Islamabad, adding that India had reneged on an agreement it reached with Pakistan in 1989 over Siachen.

The two sides fought a bloody skirmish over the glacier in 1987 that left hundreds of Indian and Pakistani soldiers dead.

Since then, hundreds more have died as a result of sporadic fighting and the extreme cold.

An Indian spokesman said Siachen would be discussed by the defence secretaries of the two countries on the second day of their November 5 to 13 talks.

Other discussion topics will include a 30-year-old row over a border creek, charges and counter-charges of terrorism and drug trafficking, as well as cultural and trade exchanges.

Six government ministers will be involved in the talks.

The Indian Foreign Ministry stressed that the long-standing territorial dispute over Kashmir, which has scuppered previous peace talks, should not be allowed to dominate the dialogue.

"If the talks on one issue casts a shadow on another, then bilateral relations will not move forward," the spokesman said.

India and Pakistan have remained bitter foes since gaining independence from British rule in 1947. They have fought three

wars including two over Kashmir.

The Himalayan state remains the chief flashpoint in bilateral ties, with India accusing Pakistan of fomenting a bloody Muslim separatist campaign there. Islamabad denies the charge.

The two countries also routinely expel each other's diplomats and accuse one another of backing terrorist groups. Despite being neighbours, their bilateral trade is negligible.

Ties were further strained when they conducted tit-for-tat nuclear tests in May — a move that drew international sanctions and intense pressure to return to the negotiating table.

Prime Ministers Atal Behari Vajpayee of India and Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan have met twice this year, agreeing during their last encounter in New York to restart the bilateral dialogue.

This week's discussions mark the second round of that process, following initial talks in Islamabad last month that were dominated by the Kashmir issue.

India and Pakistan share a 3,310-kilometer (2,068-mile) border, including 790 kilometers (493 miles) of disputed frontier in Kashmir.

## Chandrika to visit India in Dec

COLOMBO, Nov 3: Sri Lanka President Chandrika Kumaratunga will visit India next month to take part in a Buddhist ceremony, officials said today, reports AFP.

Kumaratunga is expected to lay the foundation stone for a new Buddhist pilgrims' rest in New Delhi, the officials said, adding that the visit was likely towards mid-December.

Thousands of Sri Lankan Buddhists travel to India on pilgrimages every year. Buddhism was introduced to Sri Lanka more than 2,000 years ago.

## LTTE kills 7 troops

COLOMBO, Nov 3: Tamil Tiger guerrillas today killed at least seven soldiers who were guarding local farmers against attack in eastern Sri Lanka, officials here said, reports AFP.

Gunmen of the Separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) opened fire on the soldiers in the Ampara district where security forces provide protection to civilians, officials said.

The indications are that none of the farmers were hit but the Tigers had killed seven soldiers and wounded another who were on duty near a rice farm, an official said.



Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, left, talks with Foreign Minister Mohammed Saad al-Sahaf in Baghdad, Monday before briefing the Iraqi Parliament on the leadership's decision to suspend cooperation with the United Nations' inspectors.

# Amartya Sen was subject of arrest warrant in '69

NEW DELHI, Nov 3: Indian Amartya Sen, who won this year's Nobel Prize for economics, was the subject of an arrest warrant in 1969 on charges of being a Maoist, a retired senior police officer was quoted as saying today, reports AFP.

Ranjit Gupta said he had been asked by Delhi police to arrest Sen — then a teacher in Delhi University — while the economist was visiting his family near Calcutta almost 30 years ago.

Gupta, now 78, told The Statesman newspaper that he decided to ignore the arrest order after talking with Sen, to whom he was actually related.

"Sen looked shaken" when Gupta informed him about the police suspicion that he was a Maoist, or Indian Maoist.

"Apparently (Delhi) university students would come to Amartya's house in the evenings for debates and discussions on politics," said Gupta, who in 1969 was an intelligence officer in Calcutta.

Amartya reasoned it was quite possible that some of his students... talked about revolutionary politics which was then a fad.

A Maoist movement, whose members were known as Naxalites, raged in India from 1967 until it was crushed in the early 1970s by the police. Hundreds were killed in the police crackdown.

Somehow I was convinced that Amartya couldn't be a Naxalite... I returned the requisition (from Delhi) for arresting Amartya Sen," Gupta said.

Gupta, who later played a major role in crushing the Naxalite movement in West Bengal, said he had congratulated Sen's mother when the Nobel Prize was announced.

"She thanked me for this moment of joy in her life which would not have been possible if I had arrested him then."

## AIDS claims over 100 lives in Nepal

KATHMANDU, Nov 3: More than 100 people have died from Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome in Nepal, a spokesman for the national AIDS and sexually transmitted disease prevention centre said today, reports AFP.

There have been 108 deaths while another 227 persons, 142 males and 85 females have AIDS, he said.

Another 1,145 persons have HIV which leads to AIDS. "The most affected are those men and women who are aged between 20 and 29 years," he said.

"Seven boys and four girls who are less than five years are also suffering from HIV."

# BRIEFLY

**Britain-Spain summit next year:** British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar agreed on Monday to hold the first summit between the two countries next year, AP reports from London.

The two leaders had a "very friendly" hour-long meeting at 10 Downing Street Monday that included discussions on the summit, defence and a variety of other European issues, a spokesman for Blair said. They agreed that NATO must remain the foundation of their collective security, but that Europe must be able to act militarily on its own, the spokesman said. The leaders also discussed Kosovo, and agreed they must remain firm in dealing with Iraq.

**Police kills 2 militants in Egypt:** Police on Monday shot and killed two Islamic militants wanted for a series of attacks that left 60 policemen and civilians dead or injured, a police official said. AP reports from Cairo.

Two policemen were wounded in the shootout with the militants, the official said, speaking on customary condition of anonymity. The gunbattle began after police surrounded a house where the militants had taken shelter near the village of Galal in the southern province of Minya, 190-km south of Cairo. Police identified the slain militants as Mohammed Sayed Riyad, 30, and Nadi Younis Abdel-Atheem, 23. Riyad is wanted for 22 attacks which resulted in the death or injury of 40 policemen and civilians.

**3 die as jet crashes in Canada:** Three people were killed on Monday in a fiery plane crash west of Edmonton, said Royal Canadian Mounted Police Constable Kim McKee, AP reports from Stony Plain.

A small four-seat plane clipped a guy wire of a TransAlta Utilities microwave transmission tower north of Stony Plain along Highway 779. The plane was headed to Villeneuve just northwest of Edmonton, said Clyde Johnson, regional manager for the Transportation Safety Board.

**Japan to honour former British PM:** Former British Prime Minister Edward Heath will be among 33 foreigners honoured for their help in promoting friendship between Japan and other nations, AP reports from Tokyo.

The list of this year's autumn honours list, which also includes 4,490 Japanese, was announced by the Japanese government on Tuesday, to coincide with Culture Day, a national holiday in Japan. Heath, 82, will be awarded the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun, the highest honour being offered Five Japanese will also receive that ward from Emperor Akihito in a ceremony at the Imperial Palace on Thursday.

**US weighs food aid for Russia:** A team of US officials has been in Russia for the past several days to discuss possible food aid, the State Department said on Monday, AP reports from Washington.

State and Agriculture Department officials are discussing with Russian officials the size of an aid package and the terms under which it would be offered.

Russian Agriculture and Food Minister Viktor Semyonov said last week that aid of 22 of Russia's 89 regions suffer "acute shortages of grain."

**Vietnam to make artificial rain:** Vietnamese scientists, working with Russian experts, will create the country's first artificial rain in two years, a government official says, AP reports from Hanoi.

Tuan Duy Binh, deputy director of the Institute of Hydrography and Meteorology, said on Monday the government will invest some 300,000 dollar with Russian technology to bring precipitation to the four central highlands provinces. Airplanes will be used to spray catalysts to make clouds, Binh said. Russia has made artificial rain in some parts of Russia and Syria at a cost of 5 to 8 cents per ton of rainfall, Binh said.

**DPRK to return remains of US troops:** Remains believed to be those of several American soldiers killed during the Korean War will be returned by North Korea on Friday, AP reports from Seoul.

The UN Military Command said on Tuesday the remains will be turned over to it at the border village of Panmunjon inside the demilitarised zone that separates North and South Korea. The skeletal remains were unearthed by a joint US-North Korea recovery team. Twenty sets of remains have been unearthed and returned by North Korea since the North began allowing US forensic experts to search in its territory in 1996.

# Di's car speed was 118 kph during crash

PARIS, Nov 3: The Mercedes car that Diana, Princess of Wales was riding in when she died was travelling "at least 118 kilometers (73 miles) an hour," according to a report submitted to a French investigating magistrate, a source close to the case said, reports AFP.

Crash tests conducted by the IRCGN (National Police Research Institute of Criminology) enabled experts to map out the car's destruction millimeter by millimeter, the source said.

Police on Monday handed over two secret reports on the crash to French Magistrate Hervé Stephan, who is in charge of the case. A third report on August 31, 1997 crash is yet to be submitted before any judicial follow-up can take place.

Diana was killed, along with her companion Dodi Fayed and chauffeur Henri Paul, when the Mercedes crashed into a pillar in the Alma underpass in Paris. A fourth passenger, bodyguard Trevor Rees-Jones, was seriously injured. Police estimates had put the car's speed at 180 kilometers (111 miles) an hour.

According to sources close to the case, an analysis of brake marks at the scene also helped experts estimate the speed of the Mercedes 280s at between 126 and 155 kilometers (78-96)

miles an hour when it entered the Alma Tunnel, where it scraped a white Fiat Uno which has never been found.

The IRCGN also concluded that contrary to initial reports, Rees-Jones was not wearing a seatbelt at the time of the crash. Rather, his life was saved by a perfectly functioning airbag.

As indicated by French daily Le Figaro last week, investigators ruled out a defect of the Mercedes as a factor in the smash after 13 months of technical tests on the Limousine.

The second report handed in Monday touches on the slightly higher than average amount of carboxyhemoglobin found in Paul's blood. Carboxyhemoglobin, which is typical of smokers, is a compound formed by carbon monoxide and hemoglobin that can slow down oxygenation.

According to the experts' conclusions, Paul's elevated level would be linked to his inhalation of gases emitted by the airbag at the time of the crash, the source said.

A third report that has yet to be submitted concerns the cause of death, and in the case of Diana, details on the emergency treatment she was given on the spot as well as on the way to hospital and in hospital.

# Iraqis ready for anything that will end UN trade embargo

BAGHDAD, Nov 3: Amid the rattle of dice on backgammon boards and the clatter of cups on waiters' trays, the talk at Al-Zahawi coffee house is again turning to the possibility of US military attacks, reports AP.

Al-Zahawi is patrons say they'll accept anything — even missile strikes — if that's the price of finally shaking off UN sanctions that have devastated their country.

"I think the government has taken the right decision," Imad Mohammed said. Iraq announced during the weekend that it was halting cooperation with UN arms inspectors until the United Nations moves to end the sanctions, imposed by the UN Security Council to punish Iraq for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"Not only is it right, but they should have taken this decision years ago," said Mohammed, 40, gesturing with a black backgammon chip. "Eight years of suffering is too much."

A required government escort accompanied an Associated Press reporter to the coffee house, and the customers all backed the government line. But the vehemence of the coffee house clients, and other Iraqis, suggested that many people genuinely believe that Iraq has nothing to lose in pushing to lift the sanctions.

Government officials also suggest there's no choice, except to bow to a weapons inspection system that they claim is humiliating and stacked against Iraq.

# Clinton needs pvt space to atone for Lewinsky affair

WASHINGTON, Nov 3: President Bill Clinton said in an interview today he was still working on healing his relationship with his family and felt he deserved some "private space" in which to atone for his affair with Monica Lewinsky, reports Reuters.

"All I can tell you is I'm working on it very hard and I think it's terribly important," he said in an interview on black entertainment television.

"It's more important than anything else in the world to me. But I think the less I say about it the better," he told the cable network.

Clinton acknowledged his affair with the former White

House intern on August 17 after denying it since January. He now faces an impeachment inquiry in the US House of Representatives over allegations of perjury and coverup in connection with the affair.

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton has forgiven the president, her spokeswoman said in September.

Clinton said he hoped his conviction that "even people in public life deserve some measure of private space within which to have their family lives and to deal with both the joys and trials of their personal lives."

# Japan announces aid package to Indonesia

JAKARTA, Nov 3: Japan will grant a total of 4.45 billion yen (\$38.6 million dollars) to help Indonesia's poor and boost food production, Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura said Tuesday, reports AP.

Komura announced the aid at a signing ceremony with his Indonesian counterpart, Ali Alatas, at the foreign ministry in Jakarta, the Indonesian capital.

Indonesia has been hit hard by the economic turmoil that has battered many Asian countries. Millions of Indonesians have lost their jobs and economic hardship from rising prices sparked riots that helped oust former President Suharto in May.

Indonesia is now implementing democratic reforms and is overhauling its economy in line with a multi-billion dollar rescue package set up by the International Monetary Fund. Japan is participating in the bailout.

"I would like to pay tribute to Indonesia for its efforts taken in the fields of political and economic reforms despite the difficulties it faces," said Komura, who is on a six-day trip that will include stops in Australia and New Zealand.

"Japan is determined to support Indonesia," he said.

Japan, though itself in recession, has been called on to lead the region to recovery from the economic crisis.

Japan will give 3 billion yen (dhs 26 million) to Indonesia to help pay for expensive imports of dairy products and other commodities for the poor, Komura said.

Crop production dropped in 1997 and earlier this year because of the worst drought.



Contestants in the Miss Vietnam beauty contest in swimsuits during the competition in Ho Chi Minh City on Sunday. About 25 girls from throughout the country competed in the final selection of Mss Vietnam.

# Honduras suspends civil liberties as 5000 killed

# Hurricane Mitch death toll rises to 7,000 in Central America region

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, Nov 3: With flood waters receding and communications improving, central Americans are discovering the massive devastation inflicted by Hurricane Mitch: Officials estimated about 7,000 had died in the region, reports AP.

The greatest losses were reported in Honduras, where an estimated 5,000 people died and 600,000 — 10 per cent of the population — were forced to flee their homes after last week's storm. Countless more were lacking fresh water, food and medicine.

President Carlos Flores Facusse said on Monday "the floods and landslides erased from the map many villages and households as well as whole neighbourhoods of cities." He appealed for international help.

"We have before us a panorama of death, desolation and ruin in all of the national territory," he said in a nationally broadcast speech.

"There are corpses everywhere, victims of landslides or of the waters," the president said in a nationally broadcast

speech. "The most conservative calculations of the dead are in the thousands, not in the hundreds."

Responding to widespread looting and vandalism, Flores Facusse announced a two-week "state of exception" suspending constitutional liberties that allows authorities the right to seize property, detain suspects and unlimited searches. People were ordered off the streets between 9 pm and 5 am.

Many parts of Honduras remained cut off almost a week after Mitch barreled into the Bay Island of Guanaja with 180 mph (290 kph) winds. The storm pounded across the isthmus, dropping up to 25 inches (63 centimeters) of rain in a six-hour period, before dissipating on Monday in southern Mexico.

Virtually all of Honduras suffered flooding, from the low land marshes on the Atlantic Coast to the mountains, hills and plateaus of the interior.

In neighbouring Nicaragua, the death toll was also high. Officials preliminary figures showed 1,330 dead and 1,903 missing nationwide.

As many as 1,500 people

may have died in mudslides when the crater lake of the Casitas Volcano collapsed, sending a wall of mud and debris onto villages below.

"It looked like a line of helicopters flying really low and coming at us. You could see houses, trees, everything being covered," said Ricardo Antonio Garcia, a 23-year-old farmer whose leg was amputated after being crushed in the mudslide in northwest Nicaragua.

By late Monday, soldiers had found 808 bodies out of the mudslide stricken area. Local civil defence officials said they planned to go into the disaster area on Tuesday and burn bodies to cut down on the risk of disease.

Nicaraguan Defence Minister Pedro Jaouquin Chamorro said in a telephone interview on Monday night that there had been another small mudslide on the northern slope of the volcano, but there were no apparent casualties. About 34 houses were destroyed, he said.

Among the hurricane casualties in other Central American countries, El Salvador's National Emergency Committee

listed 174 dead, 96 missing and 27,000 homeless. But its own regional affiliate in San Miguel province reported 125 dead there alone.

Guatemala reported storm-related 100 deaths. Mexico reported one.

A plane crash in western Guatemala blamed on the remnants of Mitch killed 11 people, 10 of them Americans, and injured another seven US citizens Sunday, doctors said.

Bad weather and lack of radar may have caused the crash Sunday of the C-47 cargo plane operated by the Living Water Teaching Mission, airport officials in Guatemala said.

The plane went down in heavy rain near San Andreas Xecul, 60 miles (96-km) west of Guatemala City.

The International Red Cross on Monday tripled its appeal for assistance to 7.4 million dollars.

In Washington, President Clinton said the US government was providing dhs 2 million in food, medicine, water and other relief supplies.

# Observers still demanding seats in Anwar's trial

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 3: International observers were still demanding Tuesday to be given seats in the corruption and sexual misconduct trial of Anwar Ibrahim, reports AP.

UN Rapporteur Param Cumaraswamy, himself on trial in Malaysia for defamation, said Malaysia was hurting its image by barring dozens of international human rights, judicial and diplomatic observers from the trial.

"By not allowing the international community to come in and observe the trial, the prime minister is undermining the name of the country," Param said outside the red-brick High Court on Tuesday.

Judge Augustine Paul ruled before the trial formally began on Monday that international observers would not be given special observer status and could watch the trial on a first-come, first-serve basis. But most of them could not get into the small courtroom.

Paul called the appeal by Anwar's lawyers on behalf of the observers an "insult to the court."

"There is no reason to let foreigners check us."

Representatives of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch did get seats in the public gallery. Special status would have meant reserved seats and allowing them to formally report on the trial.

Anwar, sacked by Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad on September 2 as his deputy and finance minister, is on trial for corruption and illegal sexual acts.

His case generated international concern after he appeared with a black eye and bruises during his arraignment. Anwar, who has pleaded innocent to the charges he calls politically motivated, said he was beaten up by police the night of

his arrest on September 20.

"If Malaysia wants to be in the Security Council of the United Nations and also play an important role in the international global community, why is it afraid of letting foreign observers in?" Param said.

# Kabila rejects US proposal

HARARE, Nov 3: President of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Laurent Kabila has rejected a proposal by the United States that foreign troops aiding him withdraw as a condition for a ceasefire, reports AFP.

The Congolese leader currently fighting with the assistance of Southern African Development Community (SADC) allied forces to repulse a rebellion by ethnic Tutsis backed by Rwanda and Uganda, said the call for the withdrawal of allied forces was a way of protecting the aggressors, the Daily Herald reported today.

"They wanted to see Congo start negotiating peace with rebels, nothing came out of this meeting which lasted more than four hours, their proposals which would work against the interests of the DRC, were not acceptable said Kabila on Sunday in Lubumbashi of southern Congo.

Susan Rice, US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs met Kabila last week as part of American efforts toward resolving the crisis in the vast Central African country.

We will talk to our rebels if both Uganda and Rwanda pull out to the DRC as an insecure DRC is to Rwanda or Uganda," said Kabila who accuses Rwanda and Uganda of invasion and of backing rebels in his country.

US secy of state assures Netanyahu will help steer ahead land-for-security accord with PA

WASHINGTON, Nov 3: US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright gave assurances Monday that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was committed to moving forward with the land-for-security accord he reached last month with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, reports AP.

Albright said through her spokesman, James P. Rubin, that technical, legal and political issues would not upset the "timeliness" of the agreement.

Rubin also said US mediator Dennis Ross and his deputy, Aaron Miller, would leave on Tuesday or later in the week "to have a revolving presence" in the region.

Even threats against Arafat by the radical Islamic group Hamas will not delay implementation of the agreement, Rubin said.

The threats followed a Palestinian police roundup of some 100 Hamas activists and the house arrest of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, founder of Hamas.

"Secretary Albright had a discussion with Prime Minister Netanyahu about the political/legal process the Israelis need to go through, including a vote in the Cabinet and a vote in the Knesset," Rubin said.

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The US flag is set ablaze by a group of demonstrators in front of the former US Embassy in Tehran, Monday. A large group of Iranian students of Tehran University invited by Office to Foster Unity (OFU), demonstrated in front of main door of the former US embassy, commemorating the take over of the embassy on November 4, 1980.