Tigers break pledge, says UN official

# Lanka calls for int'l coalition against child soldiers

COLOMBO, Nov 6: Sri Lanka today called for an international coalition against child soldiers as a top United Nations official said the island's Tamil rebels broke a pledge not to recruit child combatants, reports

Sri Lanka welcomed remarks by the UN special representative for children in armed conflict, Olara Otunnu, calling the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to honour pledges to ban child soldiers.

Otunnu said at the United Nations in New York on Wednesday that despite a commitment to him in May, the separatist LTTE in Sri Lanka had continued to recruit and use children in their struggle against the Sri Lankan gov-

ernment. A Sri Lankan Foreign Ministry spokesman said they welcomed Otunnu's remarks and

said it could signal a stronger UN stance against the use of children as combatants.

"We have been concerned that the UN system has not taken a stronger view on child soldier up to now. We are glad that Otunnu has finally spoken." spokesman Ravinatha Aryasinha said.

He said the Colombo government hoped Ottunu's action will lead to the formation of an international coalition against the growing problem of minors being used in wars. "It should have come earlier," Aryasinha

Otunnu who visited Sri Lanka in May said Tamil Tiger child rebels who recently surrendered during the capture of the key northern town of Mankulam were between 13 and

18 years old. "These reports are all the more disturbing against the background of that commitment," he said.

"I appeal here to the LTTE leadership to take concrete measures to stop the recruitment of children into their ranks in accordance with commitments in May."

His remarks followed a scathing attack on the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) by the Sri Lankan government which accused the UN agency of taking a "soft approach" towards the island's Tamil rebels.

Sri Lanka also criticised the UNICEF for "dragging its feet" in condemning the LTTE which is battling government forces to establish an independent Tamil homeland in the island's north-

More than 55.000 people have been killed in fighting in the past 26 years.



Paula Jones, centre, and her husband Stephen Jones, left, talk as Jones' lawyer James Fisher looks on as they have dinner on January 17, 1998, at a restaurant in Washington. Jones' lawyers informed her they'll soon abandon her sexual harassment case against President Clinton. Adjusting their settlement demand to \$950,000, the lawyers made one more stab at putting the lawsuit to rest on Thursday. — AP/UNB photo

Sexual harassment suit against Clinton

## Paula Jones' lawyers lower settlement demands

WASHINGTON, Nov 6: Paula Jones' lawyers say they'll soon quit - but first they're inching her settlement demand down to dlrs 950,000 in one more stab at concluding her sexual harassment lawsuit against President Bill Clinton, reports AP.

The president's attorney, Bob Bennett, replied that he was pessimistic about a settlement based on the new offer but planned to consult with Clinton, according to two lawyers familiar with the situation. Suggesting a waning interest in settlement, Bennett said he would not have a firm answer for several weeks and did not indicate a counteroffer from Clinton's team was in the offing, the lawyers said.

Jones' earlier dlrs 1 million demand, which Bennett rejected twice before when he countered with dlrs 500,000 and then dlrs 700,000. Bennett did not return a call

The new offer makes a rela-

tively small adjustment to Mrs

for comment on Thursday, but instead distributed a written statement: "I do not believe it is productive or appropriate to discuss in public these matters at this time.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Jones' own lawyers suggested they were tired of it all. The lawyers who have been litigating her lawsuit — from the Dallas-based firm of Rader, Campbell, Fisher and Pyke, and from The Rutherford Institute, which has been paying her expenses - wrote her on Tuesday that they would withdraw once a federal court rules on the appeal of her dismissed

Appellate arguments were heard Oct. 20.

"Paula is extremely upset that this information was given to the press," said Bill McMillan, a California attorney close to Mrs. Jones and her family. "If and when the time comes there are a number of law firms - capable law firms, excellent law firms - ready, willing and able to step in."

In a statement faxed to reporters, the lawyers said they continued to believe her case

Bishop Desmond Tutu, left, and fellow Nobel Laureate Bobby Muller listen, Thursday to a presentation by Jose Ramos-Horta on "Democracy and Diplomacy in the Asia Pacific Region" during the opening session of the Nobel Peace Laureates Conference at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. AP/UNB photo

BUILFI

Robin Cook to visit Gulf states:

Foreign Secretary Robin Cook is planning a tour of the Gulf

states to lobby for international condemnation of Iraq's

decision to stop cooperating with UN weapons inspectors, the

eign Office Minister Derek Fatchett are expected to make the

visits in the next two weeks. A foreign office spokeswoman,

speaking with customary anonymity, said additional details

were not yet available. British newspapers reported on Friday

tempts by Iraq to evade the UN oil embargo imposed after its

1990 invasion of Kuwait. The Guardian quoted Cook as saying

that he would be working with Iraq's neighbours to cut the

Batman' creator Bob Kane dead:

Batman" creator Bob Kane, who watched the comic book

character become an American icon, has died. He was 83, AP

pronounced dead at Cedars-Sinai Medical Centre, his attorney,

Jim Leonard, said Thursday. The cause of death was unclear.

Kane always was proud and astonished at the popularity of the

hero he created for DC Comics in 1939. "Bob described himself

as a doodler, so he found it absolutely amazing that one of his

doodles should live this long and become the symbol that it is,"

Thai minister's son arrested: Police

arrested a member of Parliament and son of a deputy interior

minister after the car he was driving to escape authorities ran

into two policemen, police officials said on Thursday, AP

Poonphol Asavahame was taken into custody on Wednesday

night and charged with reckless driving and injuring two po-

licemen during a car chase. In 1996, Poonphol was charged with

attempted murder after he pistol-whipped a man and fired a

shot that grazed his head when the man bumped his pickup

Sino-Albanian ties to expand: Paskal

Milo, the second Albanian Foreign Minister to visit China

since 1990, on Thursday expressed high hopes for the further

expansion of Sino-Albanian relations. Xinhua reports from

struction," said Milo, who arrived in the Chinese capital on

Tuesday for a six-day visit. Milo made the comments during

Thursday afternoon interview with local reporters. "The series

of major industrial projects built with Chinese assistance in

Albania are awaiting the return of Chinese experts," according

Dengue fever cases rising in S'pore

Cases of dengue fever are increasing rapidly in tropical

Singapore, where the number this year already exceeds the total

for 1997, a newspaper reported on Friday, AP says from

Although none have died from the mosquito-borne virus

this year, the disease has afflicted 4.628 people so far, about 400

more than last year, said The Straits Times. The Environment

Ministry predicts the number of cases in 1998 to rise to 5,000 as

the monsoon season begins soon in Singapore, providing

mosquitoes with more breeding locations, according to the re-

Quake rocks Philippines: A moderate

earthquake rocked the central Philippines before dawn Friday.

but authorities reported no damage or injuries. AP reports from

The earthquake, with an initial magnitude of 5.4, hit at 2:05

Seismologist Daphnie Agonia said the quake, caused by the

movement of the Philippine Trench under the San Bernardino

Strait, was not strong enough to generate tsunami waves.

am (1805 GMT, Thursday) and was centered off the northern

coast of central Samar island, about 440-km southeast of

Manila, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismol-

China contributed greatly to Albania's past economic con-

A police officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said

Kane collapsed at his Los Angeles home Tuesday and was

that Cook would also use the tour to urge a crackdown on any at

Cook, Defence Secretary George Robertson and a junior For-

Foreign Office said Friday, AP reports from London.

money that keeps this appalling regime in office."

reports from Los Angeles.

Leonard said.

reports from Bangkok

truck into his car.

to the Albanian leader.

Manila.

ogy said.

## Sikh religious group invites Pak PM to India

NEW DELHI, Nov 6: A Sikh religious group has invited Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to India next year for the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Sikh religion, newspapers reported today, says

The invitation was sent last week by the SGPC, the influential Sikh religious parliament which oversees Sikh temples in India. The Statesman and other

dailies said. Sikhs, whose men can be identified by their colourful turbans, account for just three per cent of India's 975 million population but are highly suc-

cessful in many fields. Sikhs populated large parts of Pakistan's Punjab province until 1947 when the Britishsponsored break-up of the Subcontinent forced them to move

Pakistan is still home to around 250 Sikh shrines. which are maintained by the Pakistani government. Every year, large numbers of Sikh pilgrims from India visit the shrines in Pakistan

Preparations are under way to celebrate the 300th year of the founding of Sikhism in the northern Indian state of Punjab

in April 1999. The heart of the festivities will be in Punjab's Amritsar City, home to Sikhdom's holiest shrine, the Golden Temple. on Thursday, Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee announced a grant of 25 million dollars for the celebra-

### Protesters demand

arrest of Suharto JAKARTA, Nov 6: Thousands of students and others rallied on the campus of the University of Indonesia Friday

and demanded that Indonesia's powerful military get out of politics, reports AP. The group said plans to retain military appointees in the nation's otherwise elected Parliament contradict a govern-

ment pledge to deliver sweeping democratic reforms. The protesters also said former President Suharto should be arrested for "political and economic crimes" and human rights abuses.

"Suharto has to be dragged into court and tried," said Fitra Arsil, a protest organiser. Suharto stepped down last

May following a wave of protests and deadly riots amid the worst economic crisis in 30

Since resigning, he has flatly denied allegations of widespread corruption. Opposition groups have criticised a government inquiry into his business dealings that has so far failed to unearth any evidence against him. Friday's protest came four

days before Indonesia's highest legislative body is scheduled to debate new political laws ahead of elections planned for next May or June.

Massive student protests are expected to be held when the 1,000-member People's Consultative Assembly meets next week, starting Tuesday.

A major issue before the assembly will be the future of the military in Indonesia's Parliament. At present the military directly appoints 75 representatives in the 500-member legislature.

### Heroin worth \$1m seized in Philippines

MANILA, Nov 6: Philippine officials have seized 40 million pesos (dlrs 1 million) worth of heroin in a parcel addressed to a Nigerian man earlier arrested on charges of drug trafficking. police said on Friday, reports

The heroin, weighing 550 grams (about 1.2 pounds), was intercepted on Thursday at the Manila international airport post office, said Senior Superintendent Reynor Gonzales, police Narcotics Group chief.

The drugs were hidden inside the hollow blades of 12 specially designed butchers' knives mailed from Karachi, Pakistan, to Andrew Ibeh Madumeril

from Nigeria, Gonzales said. Madumeril was arrested earlier with Peter Nwobodo, another Nigerian, after they were linked to a package of cocaine from Brazil that was intercepted last week.

The two men face drug trafficking charges, which carry the death penalty in the Philippines.

## BJP leader quits party ahead of provincial polls

NEW DELHI, Nov 6: A Hindu nationalist leader has quit India's ruling party ahead of crucial provincial elections this month after being denied permission to contest the polls. newspapers reported today. says AFP.

Virendra Kumar Saklecha resigned on Thursday from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), after it was announced he would not be nominated. The Times of India and other dailies said.

Saklecha is a former chief minister of Madhya Pradesh. India's largest state, and a top BJP leader in the state. Madhya Pradesh is consid-

ered the best bet for the beleaguered BJP in the November 25 elections for local governments in New Delhi City and two other states - Rajasthan and Mizo-The Hindu nationalists are

widely expected to lose to the Congress in New Delhi and the northern desert state of Rajasthan which they now rule. The BJP is a minor player in Christian majority Mizoram in the far-east. Newspapers said an angry

Saklecha would contest as an independent candidate in Madhya Pradesh, while an opposition party gave him its backing. The BJP, however, claimed Saklecha's desertion would not

affect its prospects in Madhya Pradesh, where the party is widely tipped to oust the ruling Congress.

But Saklecha's protest has added to the mounting woes of Prime Minister Atal Behari Va-

jpayee, who is grappling with runaway inflation as well as disgruntled allies in the run-up to the elections.

The upcoming polls are considered significant to the future of Vajpayee's seven-month-old multi-party coalition government that has been hurtling from one crisis to another.

A poor showing by the Hindu nationalists could lead to the main opposition Congress Party making attempts to topple the Indian government and form an alternative coalition.

#### 16 NLD members resign

BANGKOK, Nov 6: Sixteen members of Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) have resigned and closed down a party branch office, Myanmar's official media has reported, says AFP.

The NLD members in southern Thanbyuzayat township were reportedly giving up politics on their own will and closed down a party office on October 27, TV Myanmar said late Thursday in a Broadcast monitored here.

The politicians informed the government's General Election Commission of their resignations, it said.

"We give up because we have no desire to continue with the NLD's politics.

"The opposition members said in a statement to the official commission, according to the report.

Mohamed Al Fayed settles damages

provide further details.

Japan to launch

spy sats in 2002

satellites in 2002 in response to

North Korea's missile develop-

ment, the government an-

nounced on Friday, reports

The project was approved by Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi

and other ministers at a Cabi-

net meeting, Chief Cabinet Sec-

retary Hiromu Nonaka told a

"We have decided to intro-

duce satellites after discussing

the need to collect necessary in-

formation for our security in

the wake of a missile launch by

will be to collect information

the government needs for our

crisis-management measures to

deal with the defence and

diplomatic issue as well as nat-

would include funding for a

study into the project in a

planned supplementary budget for the fiscal year ending March

team for the project, including

senior members of the Foreign

Ministry, defence agency, science and technology agency and

Ministry of International

Trade and Industry, Nonaka

use them (the satellites) around

2002," Nonaka said. He did not

"Our goal is to launch and

Obuchi will set up a special

Nonaka said the government

ural disasters," he said.

"The purpose of the satellites

North Korea," Nonaka said.

news conference.

TOKYO, Nov 6: Japan will launch its first intelligence

LONDON, Nov 6: Mohamed Al Fayed agreed Thursday to pay damages to the wife of a bitter business rival who sued after the Harrods boss allegedly broke into their safe-deposit box, reports AP.

While Al Fayed "categorically denied" allegations of criminal behaviour, his lawyers negotiated a settlement in which Al Fayed and three Harrods employees have agreed to pay Josephine Rowland damages for inducement of breach of the contract under which her husband, business tycoon Tiny Rowland, had hired a safe-deposit box in Har-

rods basement vaults. At Fayed also agreed to pay the costs of the court case. Mrs Rowland continued with

the civil case against Al Fayed. whose son Dodi was killed with Princess Diana in a car crash in Paris on Aug. 31, 1997, after the death of her husband in July.

The Rowlands claimed that the items missing from the box included emeralds, rubies, rare Tibetan coins, a Tibetan stamp, a gold cigarette case, plus documents and audio tapes.

Mrs. Rowland's attorney, Christopher Moger, had contended that Al Fayed persuaded employees at Harrods to break into the Rowland's safe-deposit box in 1995. The Harrods boss wanted to use material he found to blackmail Rowland into helping him overturn a Department of Trade and Industry report into his 1985 takeover of Harrods, Moger said. The report was highly critical of Al Fayed.

## of going home

LONDON, Nov 6: A political

is confident that he'll be flying

A human rights lawyer, given special permission by the House of Lords to testify Thursday at the second day of the appeal hearing, argued that Britain must not squander this opportunity to hold Pinochet responsible for alleged human rights abuses during his 17-year

This "is the most important and significant opportunity to breach that wall of impunity" that has surrounded the 82year-old general, said lan Brownlie, who represents three human rights groups, a doctor who was tortured and three sisters of a man who disappeared.

Pinochet was arrested October 16 in a London hospital on an arrest warrant from a Spanish judge seeking his extradition. The former dictator is accused of presiding over genocide, torture and kidnappings committed by his secret police after he seized power in 1973. toppling President Salvador Allende, an elected Marxist.

## Annan for expanded HR presence in Kosovo

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 6: Secretary-General Kofi Annan called Thursday for an expanded international human rights presence in Kosovo. where conflict between Serb security forces and ethnic Albanians has left about 700 people dead, reports AP.

Despite the October 12 peace agreement for Kosovo, brokered by US envoy Richard Holbrooke, Annan said "the human rights situation in the region continues to be a grave cause for concern."

In a report on the human rights situation in Kovovo, the secretary-general cited examples of massacres and abductions, and noted reports of arbitrary arrests, torture, deaths in police custody and violent searches of the houses of political activists.

He said Holbrooke's agreement with Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic provided the basis for increasing the international community's monitoring capability in the region.

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe announced that the first 46 members of a 2,000-strong international mission of unarmed observers would arrive in Kosovo next week to start the long-term verification of the October 12 accord.

But Annan noted that the OSCE mission does not have an explicit human rights mandate. He said the organisation is consulting with the UN High Com-

missioner for Refugees on ways to cooperate on human rights.

In the report, the secretary-general said "some 700 people are believed to have lost their lives since hostilities began in the spring, while more than 240,000 people were estimated to be internally displaced in Kosovo and other parts of Yu-

Another 14,000 people fled across the border to Albania, he

According to a UN interagency update on Kosovo released Thursday, thousands of displaced people have returned to their villages since the Serb military withdrawal on October Many who found their

houses intact said they would stay, others are repairing their dwellings, and some are preparing to plant the winter crop of wheat, the UN update said. Several returnees were

killed by anti-personnel land mines or booby-traps laid around houses, buildings or wells, it said. "Although there were some

reports of harassment and obstruction by the security forces. most returnees encountered few problems," the update said.

While most Serb security, forces have withdrawn from. Kosovo, the report said human-, itarian personnel had seen security forces in the hills near the towns of Komarane. Dulje and Precevo.



Perla Dormas, 21, holds her one-year-old child, Jose Dormas at a refugee camp in Cuidad Sandino, 13 kilometers northwest of Managua, Thursday. Dormas and 100 other families living along Lake Nicaragua were forced out of their homes by flooding caused by Hurricane Mitch. -AP/UNB photo

# Off the Record

## Get-rich-quick operations

ORLANDO. Florida: Infomercial pitchman William J Mc-Corkle and his wife were ordered to forfeit 10 million dollars they accumulated from their get-rich-quick operations, reports

The decision came on Thursday, the day after McCorkle, 32, was convicted on 82 counts of fraud and money laundering. His

wife Chantal, 30, was convicted of 69 counts. Most of the McCorkles' asset's were seized by federal investigators during a raid last year of their business and homes. The assets included 7 million dollar from offshore accounts. 282,000 dollars in cash, four luxury cars, eight properties and

89,000 dollars in camera equipment. "If there is any money left over after all the victims are fully compensated, than that money goes for law enforcement purposes and into the community," said Assistant US Attorney

Marie DeMarco. McCorkle, 32, came to the hearing in US District Court from Orlando Regional Medical Centre, where he was treated overnight for anxiety. He collapsed in the courtroom on Wednesday while verdicts against him were read.

obtaining a credit card and a Social Security number under

McCorkle and his wife were charged with fraud, conspiracy,

false pretenses and laundering several million dollars into offshore bank accounts. McCorkle's companies sold videos and pamphlets that promised to teach customers how to make money on real estate deals, including buying and selling items sold in government

auctions.

Impeachment proceedings

## Hyde asks Clinton to confirm or deny allegations

WASHINGTON, Nov 6: The White House stayed mum on Thursday over House Judiciary Committee chairman Henry Hyde's scaled-back plans to carry out impeachment proceedings against President Bill Clinton, reports AFP.

"The first we heard of chairman Hyde's plan was when we saw him on television," said White House spokesman Joe Lockhart.

"So when we have received the letter we will look at (it)," he said, alluding to a written request Hyde said he had sent asking Clinton to confirm or deny the allegations against

Hyde, a Republican, said earlier he had asked the president to respond to independent counsel Kenneth Starr's explicit report into Clinton's affair with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky. Starr accuses Clinton of a range of impeachable acts to cover up the

Hyde told a Chicago news conference he was asking Clinton to "tell us what's in dispute and what is not," thereby giving the president an opportunity to testifying in person.

At the White House, Lock-

avoid the embarrassment of He also said he wants to wrap up the committee's im-

peachment hearings by year's

hart seized on Hyde's year-end goal, saying it was a positive signal, but he added that basic questions remained over the standards of impeachment and fairness of the hearings. "On the constitutional front,

I still think there has not been yet a serious effort to answer our concerns that standards of impeachment — what you judge allegations against - it haven't been discussed," he said. "So we still feel we came (up)

short here on fairness". Earlier, Clinton declined direct comment on the impeachment proceedings, saying only: "I want these hearings to be constitutionally fair and expe-

ditious. But he warned Republicans against focusing on "politics and personalities" especially in light of the surprising showing of Democrats in Tuesday's midterm elections. "The American people sent

us a message that would break

the eardrums of anyone who would listen," Clinton said. "They want their business attended to. They're tired of seeing Washington focused on politics and personalities." Hyde said he would invite Starr to testify on November 19

and that there were no plans to call other figures involved in the scandal. Media report said the move

was part of an effort by Hyde's panel to scale back the inquiry.

# Sex charges against Anwar initially dismissed as

deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim were initially dismissed as untrue in a key police report, a court was told toady, reports AFP.

Defence lawyer Christopher Fernando asked key prosecution witness former police intelligence chief Mohamed said Awang to translate into English a section of his report entitled "Allegations against Anwar."

"What I said is through our sources the allegations do not have any truth and the sequence of events appears to be something deliberately created," said told the court reading from the three-page report written in Malay. "Apart from that there are

indications that there may exist

certain groups that may have

their own agenda and play a

role behind the scenes to urge

Datuksert Anwar Ibrahim." He was referring to letters from Ummi Hafilda Ali, the sister of Anwar's then personal

secretary, and his driver Azizan

Abu Bakar, containing allegations of sexual misconduct. The report dated August 20. 1997 together with new letters retracting the earlier allegations were sent to Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad. The report was only made

available today to lawyers defending Anwar on four charges of corruption. They had demanded on Thursday to see the report, saying it could detail a conspiracy against Anwar involving several of the country's most

This report is very crucial, my lord. It goes to the root of the matter," Lawyer Christopher Fernando told presiding Justice Augustine Paul on Thursday.

prominent leaders.

# Pinochet confident

ally says Gen Augusto Pinochet home to Chile soon. But an appeal by British and Spanish prosecutors asking Britain's highest court to uphold the former dictator's arrest is dragging on into next week, reports

#### untrue in police report Ummi and Azizan to smear KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 6: Allegations of sexual misconduct against Malaysia's ousted