

# Lifting of some economic sanctions India, Pakistan welcome Clinton's decision

NEW DELHI, Nov 7: Washington's reported lifting of economic sanctions could improve the atmosphere as the United States confronts India and Pakistan over their tit-for-tat nuclear weapons testing, a Pakistani official said on Saturday.

"It is a very welcome step," said Pakistani Foreign Ministry spokesman Tariq Alataf, who was in New Delhi with a team sent by his country for peace talks with India.

Pakistan has always been saying the coercive atmosphere should be removed," Alataf said. "This is a good step. We welcome it."

A senior Washington official told The Associated Press on Friday that President Bill Clinton would soon formally announce a partial lifting of sanctions, using flexibility recently granted him by Congress. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the Clinton administration believed India and Pakistan were moving away from nuclear confrontation, and wanted to create an atmosphere for further progress.

Indian Foreign Ministry spokesman KC Singh called the reported US step "positive."

In reaction to the May tests,

the United States cut off all but humanitarian aid, blocked moves by international lending organisations to extend support to the countries, and stopped programmes meant to boost trade ties.

Pakistan, its economy already battered by mismanagement and corruption, was harder hit than India. The Indian economy has only recently begun to open up to foreign investment, and US companies had been eager to do business in a country, with a population approaching 1 billion.

Among the sanctions the US official said would be lifted are prohibitions participation in US foreign investment and trade promotion programme. The programme were worth 300 million dollars to India before the sanctions were imposed, the official said. Pakistan did not take part in these programmes.

The administration also will attempt, on a one-time basis, to facilitate an agreement between Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund, the official said.

In addition to the sanctions, the United States started a series of talks aimed primarily at getting India and Pakistan to sign an international nuclear test ban treaty.

AFP adds: India's ruling Hindu nationalist today welcomed President Bill Clinton's decision to lift some sanctions imposed on India and Pakistan.

But Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party) warned that New Delhi was not prepared to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) immediately.

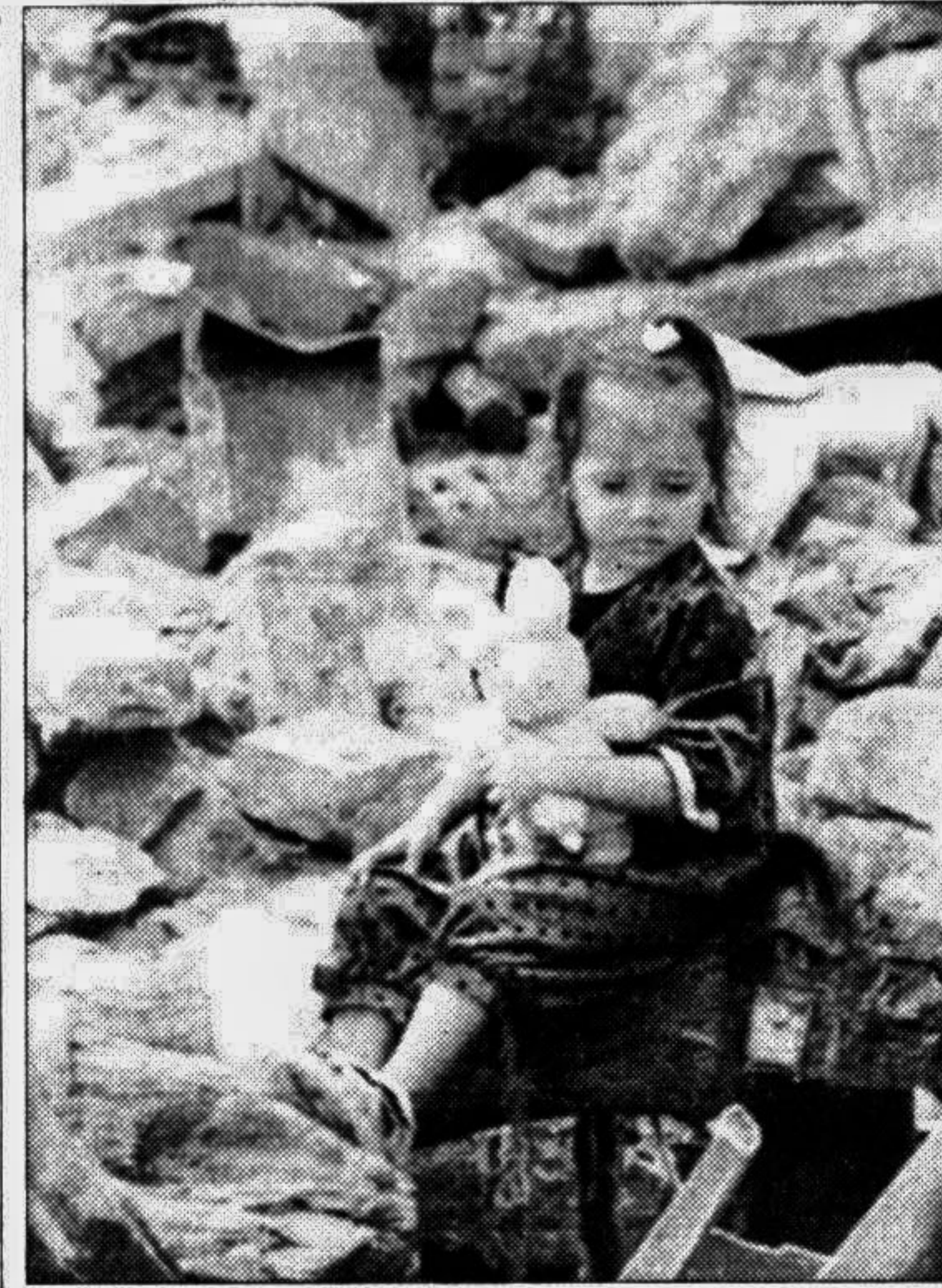
"The BJP feels that the US thinking is on the right direction and they will ultimately understand India's concerns and withdraw all the sanctions," party spokesman Krishan Lal Sharma told AFP.

A senior US official said on Friday in Washington that the US president had made the decision because of "concrete steps" taken by Islamabad and New Delhi to address our non-proliferation concern.

"He has decided in a very limited, targeted way to lift various sanctions," the official said.

Sharma said the BJP hoped the United States "will reconsider all the measures taken against India after the nuclear tests in May."

"We feel there should be no delay in removing all the sanctions and in normalising Indo-US relations. Partial steps will not serve any purpose."



Zuri Vazquez, 3, sits among the rubble that was her home in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, on Friday. Last week's flooding from Hurricane Mitch devastated her family's home. The Vazquez family sifted through the debris, looking for anything salvageable. — AP/UNB photo

# US quietly priming itself for military action against Iraq

WASHINGTON, Nov 7: The United States is quietly priming itself for military action against Iraq, lining up access to bases in the region and seeking diplomatic support to force Baghdad to yield to UN arms inspections, US officials say, reports AFP.

NBC television cited diplomatic sources as saying a US military attack could come as early as next week.

During a stopover in Turkey, US Defence Secretary William Cohen warned Iraq's President Saddam Hussain "It's important that the decision of his to halt UN arms inspections be reversed very soon."

Unlike a similar confrontation last winter, Washington has refrained from public displays of sabre-rattling and blustering threats of military action, opting instead for low-key diplomacy in the Gulf, at the United Nations and with European allies.

The UN Security Council's unanimous passage on Thursday of a resolution condemning Iraq — but stopping short of threatening military action — was presented by US officials as evidence of Baghdad's international isolation.

Meanwhile, President Bill Clinton warned on Friday that US forces in the Gulf are capable of launching "swift, powerful strikes" against Iraq if necessary to force it to comply with all UN resolutions.

"The United States and allied forces now in the theater are prepared to deal with all contingencies," Clinton said in a letter to Congress that called Iraq a threat to international peace and stability.

Clinton's warning — his bluntest yet of possible US military force — came amid a flurry of diplomacy aimed at forcing Iraq to back down from a decision to halt all UN inspections.

Clinton said he was "determined to see Iraq comply fully with all its obligations under UN Security Council resolutions."

"Our contingency plans allow us the capability for swift powerful strikes if that become necessary," he said, noting that US forces now have twice as many Cruise missiles in the Gulf as they did a year ago before the last confrontation with Iraq.

"We have the capability to respond rapidly to possible Iraqi aggression, we will continue to maintain a robust force posture and have established a rapid deployment capability to supplement our forces in the Gulf when needed," he said.

AP adds: US Defence Secretary William Cohen returned from an 11-nation visit to the

Middle East, saying he felt satisfied that the United States would have adequate support from Arab allies to "carry out the military action that would have to be necessary" against Iraq.

Cohen landed late on Friday at Andrews Air Force Base outside of Washington after a flight from Turkey.

He told reporters that his trip was not only to consult with allies but also to convey "how seriously we view the situation (with)... Iraq once again failing to live up to its obligations."

US officials for days have hinted that the United States was prepared to take military action because of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein's failure to cooperate with United Nations weapons inspectors. Cohen did not elaborate on possible military action, but said "time is short" for the Iraqi leader to comply with UN resolutions.

"Each time (Saddam) has provoked a crisis he has sought to acquire carrots and compromises, to relieve the crisis," Cohen said. "As far as we are concerned, no more carrots, no more compromises. There must be full compliance."

Cohen said he planned to brief President Bill Clinton on the trip over the weekend.

## BRIEFLY

**4 die in Indian building collapse:** A four-story apartment building collapsed Saturday in the southern town of Thane, crushing four residents to death, witnesses said, AP reports from Thane, India.

At least 10 people were believed trapped under the debris of the building, but the number could be much larger as it was not clear how many people were home when the building collapsed. The United News of India news agency reported rescue workers from the local government were clearing the debris and looking for survivors and bodies. Further details were not immediately available.

**5 murder suspects lynched in Java:** Mobs have lynched five more people suspected of taking part in the murders of dozens of Muslim clerics and others accused of dabbling in black magic, a report said Saturday, AP reports from Jakarta.

The latest revenge attacks took place in three separate locations in Central Java province on Thursday, the Jakarta Post newspaper reported. Two men and one woman killed in the attacks were mentally ill, the report said.

**Turkey invites UN torture expert:** A top UN expert on torture has been invited for a ten-day fact finding visit to Turkey, which has long been accused of abusing prisoners and Kurdish sympathisers, AP reports from Geneva.

Special investigators Nigel Rodley plans to meet Turkish government officials, non-governmental organisations and private individuals during his trip there Nov 9-19, a UN statement said Friday. He also hopes to visit prisons and other detention centres in Ankara, Istanbul and the southeastern province of Diyarbakir — one of the bases of Kurdish rebels seeking autonomy from Turkey, Rodley, a British law professor, will present his findings to the UN Commission on Human Rights at its annual session next March.

**3 missing in Lisbon arms depot blast:** Three people were missing and feared dead after a series of explosion at a munitions factory arms dump in the north of Lisbon on Friday which also left 14 people slightly injured, medical sources said, AFP reports from Lisbon.

The three missing, two men and a woman, were inside the arms depot when the first explosion occurred at 4:43 pm (16:43 GMT), a rescue official said. Firemen said it was believed they had died on the spot but their bodies had still not been found Friday night in the rubble of the Paulo Inacio factory which makes firearms and ammunition.

## No breakthrough in talks on greenhouse gas cuts

BUEENOS AIRES, Nov 7: After a week of fragmented talks at the global warming conference here, all parties appeared anchored in their positions, with no breakthrough in sight in a plan to implement cuts of greenhouse gases, reports AFP.

The UN climate change conference is to conclude next Friday, and officials from some 180 nations are looking for a consensus on a plan to implement the agreement of December 1997 in Kyoto, Japan.

But a proposal by host nation Argentina and backed by the United States to get developing nations to make voluntary cuts in emissions was scuttled, and the bloc representing the developing world said the poor countries should not become scapegoats.

The proposal for voluntary commitments is not logical," Indonesian diplomat Arizal Effendi, the new head of the G77 plus China, which now groups some 140 developing countries, said in a speech.

The United States is pressing delegates in Buenos Aires to support "flexibility mechanisms" that it says would reduce costs to industry by allowing industrialised countries to buy greenhouse gas emission "allowances" from countries that have already achieved the cutbacks required by Kyoto.

Melinda Kimble, acting Assistant Secretary of State for Ocean, International Environment and Scientific Affairs, said the US proposal includes mechanisms to "give the developed world the opportunity to reduce emissions, nationally and globally, while their economies continue growing."

Kimble said the plan offers the greatest opportunity for all nations to reach consensus.

## Malaysian court rejects application for release by Anwar's brother

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 7: A Malaysian court today rejected an application for release from prison by the adopted brother of sacked finance minister Anwar Ibrahim, the national Bernama news agency reported, reports Reuter.

High Court Judge Abdul Wahab Patail rejected a habeas corpus application by Sukma Dermawan and ruled that the sessions court that convicted him had the jurisdiction to decide the sodomy case against him, Bernama said.

Sukma and Anwar's former speechwriter Munawar Anees were each sentenced on September 19 to six months jail after admitting to being sodomised by Anwar.

## Gingrich not to seek reelection to Speaker's post

WASHINGTON, Nov 7: US House of Representatives Speaker Newt Gingrich said in statement on Friday he will not seek reelection to that post, reports Reuters.

"Today I have reached a difficult personal decision. I will not be a candidate for Speaker of the 106th Congress," Gingrich said.

An aide to Gingrich said it also was unlikely the Georgia Republican would serve out his full two-year-term as a member of Congress but that he had not made a final decision on that matter.

Gingrich, 55, was reelected by voters in his Marietta, Georgia district on Tuesday.

## Chile recalls envoy Spain approves request for Pinochet's extradition

SANTIAGO, Nov 7: Chile recalled its ambassador to Spain on Friday immediately after the Spanish government approved a judge's request for the extradition of former Chilean leader Augusto Pinochet from Britain, reports Xinhua.

But Foreign Minister Jose Miguel Insulza told reporters that the recall does not mean a break-up of diplomatic relations with Spain.

He said Ambassador Sergio Pizarro Mackay was being recalled because President Eduardo Frei wanted to know more about why Madrid decided to approve Spanish Judge Baltasar Garzon's request to seek Pinochet's extradition and put him on trial for genocide.

## Arafat vows to confront terrorist acts aimed at destroying ME peace

JERUSALEM, Nov 7: Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has promised to find those behind a suicide bombing in the heart of Jerusalem that killed the two assailants, injured 21 people and jeopardised the new peace accord, reports AP.

"We must work together. Israelis and Palestinians, to confront these terrorist acts that aim to destroy the peace process," Arafat said after Friday's attack on a crowded open-air market swarming with shoppers readying for the Jewish Sabbath.

In a rare direct statement to the Israeli people, Arafat appeared on Israeli television and urged that the attack not be allowed to set back peace efforts. He promised to "exert 100 per cent effort" to track down those involved in planning the bombing.

It was the second suicide bombing since the signing of the land-for-peace accord two weeks ago. On Oct 29, an activist from the radical group Hamas activist killed himself and an Israeli soldier when he tried to ram an explosives-rigged car into a bus carrying Jewish schoolchildren.

Hamas claimed responsibility for Friday's attack, but Palestinian security officials blamed members of the militant Islamic Jihad.

The officials identified one of the dead assailants as Yusef Ali Mohammed Zughayar, 18, of Anata, a refugee camp north of Jerusalem, and the second as Suleiman Musa Dahayneh, 23, from a village outside the West Bank town of Jenin. Both were described as Islamic Jihad activists.

Arafat called Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to express his sorrow over Friday's attack, but Netanyahu's office said the Israeli leader told Arafat that for the peace process to continue, the Palestinians would have to significantly step up their war against terrorists.

Israel's Cabinet, which was meeting at the time of the attack, cut short its debate on ratifying the accord, and did not set a date for resuming it.

The Palestinian Cabinet condemned the attack following its own meeting Friday night, but said Israel should not use it as an excuse to halt the peace process.

The toll from the attack at the Mahane Yehuda market was far lighter than might have been expected because the explosives apparently went off prematurely. Many shoppers in the crowded market saw smoke and flames coming from the car and fled moments before the main blast.

Suitcases were found in the car's wreckage, Israel radio reported, suggesting the attackers may have intended to carry separate parcels of explosives deep into the crowd. That method was used in an attack at the market 16 months ago that killed the two suicide bombers and 16 others.

## US fails to get elected to UN's budget committee

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 7: In a humiliating defeat related to Washington's failure to pay UN arrears the United States on Friday failed to be reelected to the UN's top budget oversight committee, reports AFP.

The UN General Assembly's Fifth Committee responsible for financing on Friday voted to fill six vacancies in the key 16-member Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

The United States — thrown off the committee two years ago amid strong displeasure with Washington's withholding of more than one billion dollars in UN arrears fielded a candidate.

However, in the regional group in which Washington was competing, Britain was elected outright, incumbents Germany and Italy secured the same number of votes, triggering a run-off ballot between those two countries.

In the Asian group of countries Pakistan beat out incumbent China, the six countries elected on Friday were Britain, Costa Rica, Japan, India, Italy and Pakistan.

The United States which is the biggest UN contributor but also its biggest debtor owes the United Nations 1.28 billion dollars in arrears.

US Charge d'Affaires Peter Burleigh noted on Friday that despite the arrears problems Washington remained the major donor to the United Nations family and had supplied almost two billion dollars this year to the UN system.

Western diplomats said there was no doubt that the poor US showing was linked to the US failure to pay the arrears.

## Nobel Peace laureates urge China to open talks on Tibet

CHARLOTTEVILLE, Virginia, Nov 7: Seven Nobel Peace Prize laureates, including the Dalai Lama, urged China on Friday to open formal talks to find a peaceful resolution to the Tibet issue," reports Reuter.

Chinese President Jiang Zemin earlier this year offered to enter into talks on the condition that the Dalai Lama recognise Taiwan and Tibet, which was invaded by Communist Chinese troops in 1950, as parts of China.

"I'm not seeking independence. I am seeking autonomy self-rule," the Dalai Lama said on the closing day of a two-day conference on peace and reconciliation at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, a college town in central Virginia.

The Dalai Lama, who has lived in exile since 1959 and received the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize for a plan that would make Tibet an international peace zone, declined to comment on whether he had accepted the Chinese view that the Himalayan region has always been part of China.

"Now is not the time for me to speak," he said.

The Dalai Lama has renounced Tibetan independence as a goal for the future, and on Friday he said Tibetans would not demand control over foreign affairs and defence if a system of autonomous self-rule could be negotiated with China.

John Akkerly, president of the Washington based International Campaign for Tibet, said on Wednesday the Dalai Lama might offer a gesture to accelerate talks with the Chinese government during his nine-day visit to the United States.

## Researcher hopes to develop AIDS vaccine in 4 yrs

BANGKOK, Nov 7: American AIDS researcher Robert Gallo has said that recent work has raised his confidence that a vaccine can be developed against the deadly disease in four years, reports AP.

Speaking to Thai researchers on Friday at Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University, Gallo, credited for co-discovering HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, said he was more confident of a vaccine than a year ago.

"Recent researches make me confident that we will have something in the form of a preventive vaccine, say, in the coming three or four years," Gallo was quoted by The Nation newspaper as saying.

Gallo said recent laboratory studies show that a protein in the urine of women early in pregnancy can inhibit the replication of HIV virus in the test tube.

Study on a vaccine is meanwhile under way on 80 volunteers in several European countries and Israel made by combining interferon, used in treating Hepatitis B and cancer, with TAT, an HIV-generated protein. Trials are likely to begin in the United States after it receives approval by the US Food and Drug Administration, possibly in February, Gallo was quoted by the Bangkok Post as saying.

Clinical trials could begin in Thailand after that, he said.

Gallo is a director of the Institute of Human Virology in Baltimore, Maryland.



Portugal's rising star model, 15-year-old Diana, walks a white dog on the catwalk while displaying a white swimsuit from the 1999 summer collection by designer Ana Salazar during the twice-a-year "Moda Lisboa" fashion show Friday in Lisbon. — AP/UNB photo

## Kashmir dispute Gandhi's grandson surprise ally of Pakistan!

ISLAMABAD, Nov 7: Pakistan has found a surprise supporter to its stand on Kashmir in Raj Mohan Gandhi, grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, who has assumed the role of its position on the issue and holds plebiscite according to United Nations resolution, reports PTI.

Raj Mohan Gandhi, who is here in connection with a seminar, was repeatedly shown on the Pakistan television over the last two days expressing his views on the issue.

Pakistan should remind India of its promise to hold plebiscite in Kashmir to decide the fate of Kashmir, he said, adding India has accepted at all the international fora that it will honour the wishes of the people of Kashmir.

Raj Mohan said for the first time Kashmir has been put on the top of agenda of the talks between the two countries which is a major development and should be welcomed.

## Hun Sen calls rivals 'cowards' for refusing to accept defeat

PHNOM PENH, Nov 7: Cambodian strongman Hun Sen on Saturday accused opposition parties of using security concerns as a pretext to maintain Cambodia's political stalemate, reports AP.

Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party won 64 of the 122 Assembly seats in July elections, but Prince Norodom Ranariddh and Sam Rainsy, whose combined seats total 58, say their opponent's victory was achieved through widespread fraud.

Fearing arrest and violence, both opposition leaders have left the country, leaving behind a deadlocked political situation. Hun Sen does not have the needed two-thirds majority to form a new government.

"Any political parties that complain about the formula (to allocate Assembly seats) are cowards," Hun Sen said in a televised speech.

Cambodia's highest appeals organ, the CPP-packed Constitutional Council, has brushed aside complaints about the formula which the two-opposition bloc claims was illegally changed in favour of Hun Sen.

Ranariddh and Sam Rainsy have demanded a review of the formula as one of several preconditions for the start of negotiations on a coalition govt.

The two, along with many newly elected members of Parliament, left the country soon after the ceremonial assembly opening on September 24. The opening was marred by a rocket attack which Hun Sen and his security chiefs claimed was an assassination attempt by the opposition.

The opposition bloc has recently demanded from Hun Sen a written guarantee of safety and freedom from arrest as a condition for their return to resume the stalled talks.

In a statement on Friday, the opposition labelled as an empty promise a government guarantee that it was safe for opposition members to conduct political activities inside Cambodia.

Hun Sen described security problems for opposition members as "unimportant" and "a political pretext" to prolong the current stalemate.

Although he acknowledged that the return of opposition legislators would help pull Cambodia out of its political and economic stagnation,



Members of the Organisation of Relatives of the Missing and Detained hold a vigil in Santiago, Chile, on Friday to support the arrest of Gen Augusto Pinochet. Chile recalled its ambassador to Spain on Friday to protest the Spanish government's decision to request the extradition of the former dictator, who was detained in London on Oct. 16 at the request of a Spanish judge who wants to try him for genocide, terrorism and torture. — AP/UNB photo

## Milosevic refuses to let UN team investigate Kosovo atrocities

BELGRADE, Nov 7: The regime of Yugoslav strongman Slobodan Milosevic is taking a tougher line with the UN War Crimes Tribunal and has refused to let it investigate alleged atrocities in Kosovo, claiming recent accords with the international community do not allow for such a probe, reports AFP.

Louise Arbour, chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) said on Thursday that Belgrade had informed her office that ICTY investigators would not be allowed to conduct investigations in Kosovo.

Upon this refusal, Arbour and ICTY president, Gabrielle McDonald, cancelled their planned visit to Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) this weekend.

McDonald and Arbour were due to participate in a conference in Belgrade by the local non-government organisation, Foundation for Humanitarian Rights.

Natasa Kandic, chairwoman of the foundation, told the Independent Fonet news agency that Belgrade has "broken off its relations with the ICTY."

"This severe measure will only worsen the position of Yugoslavia and risk compromising everything that has been achieved, thanks to the accord" on Kosovo, reached on October 13 between Milosevic and US envoy Richard Holbrooke, she added.

McDonald said she would ask the UN Security Council, which set up the tribunal and has repeatedly called on the body to investigate crimes in Kosovo, to force Yugoslavia into relenting.

Another report from Pristina says, five Kosovo rebels were killed in clashes with Serbian police on Friday, in the first major incident since US envoy Richard Holbrooke and Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic last month reached an accord which brought a fragile ceasefire in Kosovo.

The five dead men, wearing the uniform of the insurgent Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), were part of a larger group of separatists who attacked a police patrol between the towns of Orshovac and Suva Reka, the Serb-run information centre said.

The Kosovo Albanian Information Centre (KIC) in Pristina confirms that there has been casualties in fresh fighting in the region, without giving further details.

Another KLA rebel was killed in a similar incident Thursday in the western Klaina region. Both sides accused each other of provoking that clash between the rebels and the Serb police.

Friday's incident marked the first big violation of the fragile ceasefire which lasted since early October after nearly eight months of clashes.

Meanwhile, the head of the Yugoslav Army Chief of General Staff, General Momo Perisic, said Friday that his troops "will not withdraw from Kosovo."

He added that the army "will continue to protect the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia and will not withdraw under any circumstances from the territory. It is our constitutional and patriotic duty."