

Experts arrive in Baghdad this week

# New UN teams will test Iraq's cooperation with inspectors

BAGHDAD, Nov 26: With renewed backing from the Security Council, UN weapons experts arrive this week for new inspections that could provide a major test of Baghdad's cooperation with the teams charged with destroying Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, reports AP.

UN teams have carried out more than a week of visits since Iraq relented Nov. 14 and allowed them to resume their work after a two-week hiatus. So far, Iraq has cooperated with the searches.

But most of those visits were to sites that monitors had already checked and usually involved maintenance work on long-term monitoring equipment. The real test will likely come during searches of new sites by the visiting teams of weapons experts.

The new teams should arrive this week, Caroline Cross, a UN spokeswoman for the weapons inspectors in Baghdad, said Wednesday.

Iraq's UN ambassador said in a CNN interview that Iraq would cooperate when inspections of the new sites begin. "We'll be providing full access to the sites that they want to investigate or to inspect," Nizar Hamdoun said.

Over the past week, a new dispute emerged over the demand by Richard Butler, the chief weapons inspector, for documents on Iraq's weapons programme. Iraq refused the request, saying many were already destroyed. Other documents, like personal diaries, were either irrelevant or had already been viewed by inspectors, it said.

The UN Security Council responded to the dispute by issuing a one-sentence statement reaffirming its support of the inspectors' mission, but the council did not publicly address whether Iraq has reneged on its pledge to fully cooperate with the arms experts.

Although the United States

and Britain have said their forces in the Persian Gulf could still attack Iraq over the dispute, they seem willing to wait to see how much help Iraq provides in the coming weeks.

Still, Hamdoun said he anticipates that Iraq will be hit by US and British airstrikes as early as next month.

He said he anticipates an attack given the reluctance of the United States to reconsider its policy (and) to find a way out of this deadlock and to try to give Iraq an incentive to cooperate.

"I do expect some crisis probably also within December," he said in the CNN interview.

The UN inspectors must certify that Iraq has destroyed its long-range missiles, chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and programmes to build them before the Security Council will lift crippling sanctions imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990.

Inspectors blame Iraq's lack

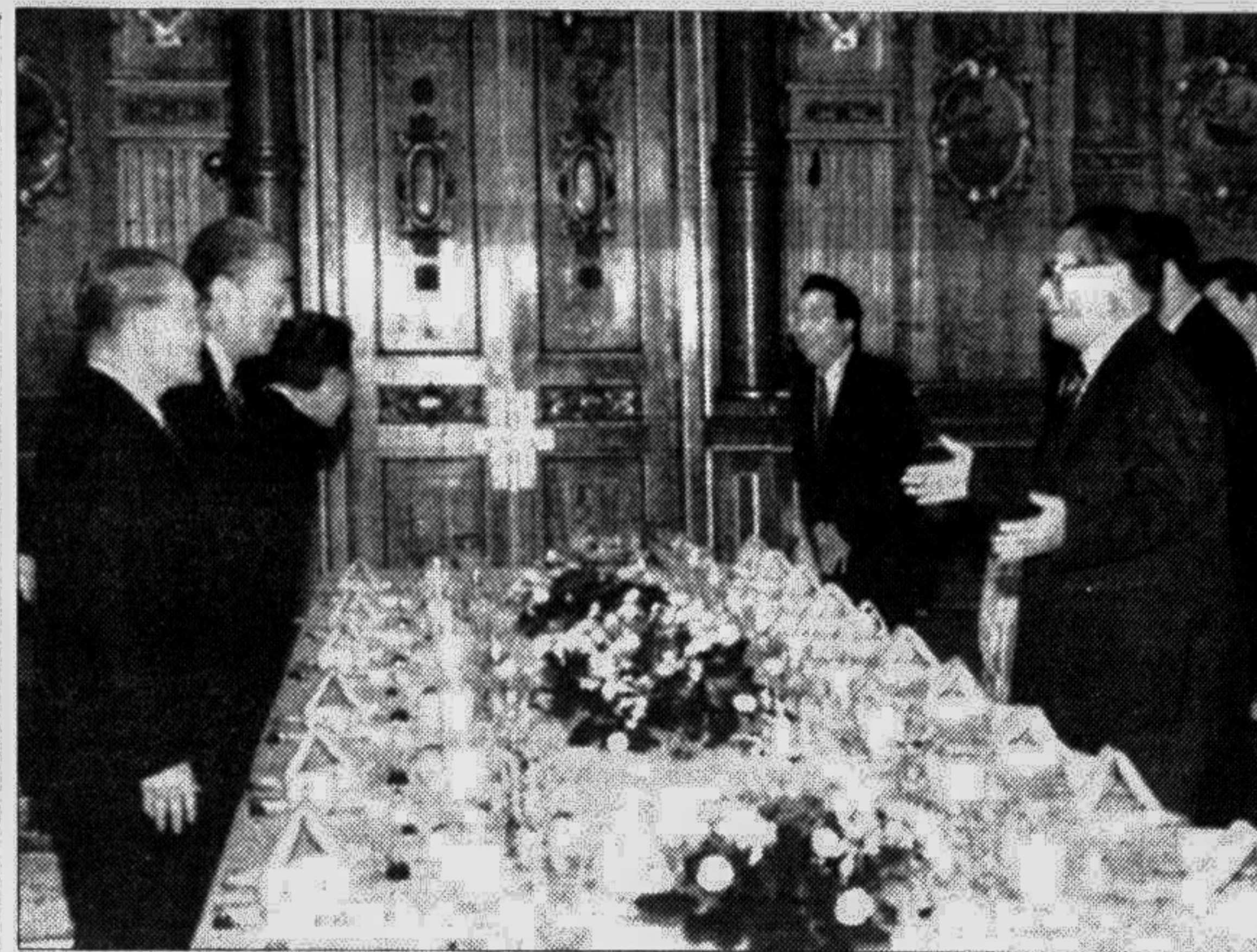
of cooperation for the long tenure of their work. But Iraq believes the inspections are used as an excuse to prolong the sanctions, which have impoverished the country.

The Security Council agreed to ease the sanctions in 1996 to allow Iraq to sell oil in order to buy basic necessities for Iraq's 22 million people. The council renewed that programme Tuesday and Hamdoun on Wednesday approved terms allowing the sale of \$5.2 billion in oil over six months.

The official Iraqi media often blame Butler personally for the prolonged conflict.

Butler looks for "a new excuse to be used by the United States and Britain in order to trigger a new aggression against Iraq," said Al-Thawra, the newspaper of the ruling Baath Party.

"It seems that his part is confined to creating a new crisis, no more," Al-Thawra said in an editorial Wednesday.



Chinese President Jiang Zemin, right, speaks to Japanese former prime ministers, Noboru Takeshita, Yasuhiro Nakasone, and Toshiaki Kaifu, prior to the start of a meeting at the Akasaka state guest house in Tokyo Thursday. Jiang is on a six-day state visit to Japan. — AP/UNB photo

## Court declares Mongolia gov't unconstitutional

ULAN BATOR, Nov 26: The highest court in Mongolia has ruled the country's government unconstitutional, deepening the crisis in an already fragile democracy, sources said today, reports AP.

The nine-member constitutional court ruled that members of the country's parliament, the Great Hural, may not serve as cabinet ministers, citing a constitutional clause that prohibits MPs from simultaneously holding other posts.

Mongolia's pro-democracy coalition government was voted out of office in July by MPs loyal to President Nachagyn Bagabandi, a former communist.

Since then the President has refused all candidates put forward by the cabinet to replace Prime Minister Tsakhiaгийн Элбэгдорж.

One of the most popular choices, Infrastructure Minister Sanjaasuregjin Zorig, was hacked to death with an axe shortly before his formal nomination as a successor to Elbegdorj.

The court's decision strongly reinforces the president's hand in the contest, providing a further blow to Elbegdorj's government, which has tottered on under "caretaker" status since July.

## New twist delays trial of Anwar Ibrahim

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 26: A surprise twist delayed the sex and corruption trial of former Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim on Thursday when the chief prosecutor was called away to testify in a related criminal case, reports AP.

Abdul Gani Patail, who is leading the prosecution against Anwar, had been subpoenaed to take the stand against Anwar's former tennis partner, who faces the death penalty for alleged illegal possession of live bullets.

Anwar's trial was to resume later Thursday, however. The other trial ended up being recessed until Jan. 25 to give a new lawyer on the defence team time to make his preparations.

In Anwar's case, now in its 14th day in court, prosecution witness Amir Jumas, a former deputy chief of police intelligence, was to continue his testimony.

Amir had testified Wednesday that Anwar, when in power, had ordered him to use scare tactics to force retractions from Umni Hafidza Ali and Azizhan Abu Bakar, both of whom had accused Anwar of sexual misconduct.

## Ireland likely to return to Commonwealth

LONDON, Nov 26: Ireland is ready to begin considering a possible return to the Commonwealth, Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern said today ahead of a historic visit by British Prime Minister Tony Blair, reports AP.

Ahern told the Times newspaper that he would not "certainly not be suppressing" a debate within his country about rejoining the Commonwealth, which Ireland left in 1949 after it declared itself a republic.

The premier said the 54-nation body was now "a very different thing that what it was 50 years ago."

He pointed out that the prospect had already been raised by politicians in Ireland, including members of his own Fianna Fail party and "it will be an issue that will be debated over time."

Recently, supporters of a return to the Commonwealth have said the development would further cement the new relationship between Britain and Ireland in the wake of April's Northern Ireland peace deal.

## Autonomy for E Timor: US resumes talks

UNITED NATIONS, Nov 26: The UN envoy for East Timor resumed talks with representatives from Indonesia and Portugal to put the final touches on an agreement that would give East Timor wide-ranging autonomy, a UN official said, reports AP.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas and his Portuguese counterpart Jaime Gama agreed in August to hold in-depth discussions on Indonesia's proposals for a special status for East Timor based on wide-ranging autonomy.

The ministers said they hoped that an agreement could be reached before the end of the year. A UN official said the three-way talks on Wednesday and Friday were aimed at reaching a final agreement.

Indonesia invaded the former Portuguese colony in 1975 and annexed it early the next year. The United Nations and Portugal do not recognise Indonesia's claim.

The UN talks were clouded by reports of a massacre of dozens of East Timorese rebels in a series of clashes with Indonesian troops. The Indonesian government denied Tuesday that it had killed more than 40 East Timorese.

Portugal suspended talks with Indonesia on Saturday following reports of the massacre and accused Jakarta of breaking promises to reduce its military presence in East Timor.

UN envoy James H. D. Markert separately Tuesday with Indonesian representative Nugroho Wisnumurti and Portugal's delegate to the talks, Fernando Neves.

## UK court upholds Pinochet's arrest Cheers outnumber jeers in reaction worldwide

MADRID, Nov 26: Prosecutors and human rights advocates around the world hailed a British court ruling Wednesday upholding the arrest of former Chilean ruler Augusto Pinochet as a landmark decision against dictators who commit atrocities with impunity, reports AP.

Pinochet supporters in Chile called it a violation of national sovereignty and the work of communists.

But the cheers far outnumbered the jeers worldwide.

Especially elated by the news was Isabel Allende, the daughter of Socialist Chilean President Salvador Allende, who died during the 1973 coup that put Pinochet in power for 17 years.

"I feel enormous satisfaction on this historic day. It's a 'No' to impunity and a 'Yes' to justice," she said at a press conference in Madrid. Allende, a Socialist Party parliamentary deputy in Chile, said she had come to Spain to await the announcement of the British ruling.

In Geneva, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson said the ruling "will hearten human rights defendants around the world."

Spain's conservative government reacted cautiously, sticking to a position that he

would let the judicial process take its course. Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar said Spain would respect any decision by the British justice system and was confident that relations with Chile would remain good.

Amnesty International called it "a landmark breakthrough" that "reaffirms the international community's commitment towards the fulfillment of basic human rights for all."

Family members of Chileans killed or who disappeared during Pinochet's dictatorship celebrated on the streets of London. Santiago and Madrid at the 3-2 vote by Britain's highest court that Pinochet does not enjoy diplomatic immunity from arrest.

The decision means Pinochet must remain in custody while Spain seeks his extradition on charges of genocide related to killings and torture by his security forces.

"This is a surprise. This is joy," France's Socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin told reporters. "It's bad news for all dictators."

Prosecutors in France, Switzerland and Germany saluted the decision.

"It's a victory for law and morality," said William Bourdon, a lawyer representing some of the family members of

French citizens who disappeared. "A trial of Pinochet is now possible in Paris and in Madrid."

In Switzerland, Geneva State Prosecutor Bernard Bertossa said the decision "marks an evolution in British justice."

A state court in Dusseldorf, Germany also greeted the court ruling.

A report from Santiago adds: Police used tear gas and water cannons to disperse separate demonstrations by supporters and foes of Gen. Augusto Pinochet, whose bid for immunity from arrest was rejected in Britain in a case that has further polarised Chile.

More than 40 demonstrators were detained late Wednesday in Santiago and at least two provincial cities, police said.

Chilean supporters of Pinochet who watched Wednesday's announcement live on television reacted with disbelief, frustration and anger upon hearing the news. His foes broke out in loud cheers and joyful applause.

Shortly after the ruling was known, small groups of demonstrators on both sides took to the streets in mostly peaceful marches. A few scattered clashes were broken up by police using water cannons.

## Hun Sen made prime minister of Cambodia

PHNOM PENH, Nov 20: Strongman Hun Sen, who seized power in a coup d'état last year, can now boast of being his country's legal and legitimate leader with his appointment as prime minister by a royal decree announced Thursday, reports AP.

The appointment by King Norodom Sihanouk, dated Wednesday, came four months after Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party won a plurality in parliamentary elections.

Hun Sen had to allow long-time rival Prince Norodom Ranariddh, leader of the royalist FUNCINPEC party, to become president of the national assembly in order to win enough support to form a new government.

Hun Sen had ousted Ranariddh as his co-premier in last year's coup, killing a number of Ranariddh's top aides in the process.

Legitimately or not, Hun Sen has been Cambodia's top political figure for more than a dozen years.

He first became prime minister in 1985 at the age of 33, making him the world's youngest leader at the time.

But Cold War politics denied Hun Sen's government wide recognition. He led a Communist regime installed by the Vietnamese in 1979 after Hanoi invaded Cambodia and ousted the brutal Khmer Rouge from power.

With the United States,

China and their allies supporting the Khmer Rouge, the United Nations, continued to recognize the Maoist guerrillas as the legitimate leaders of Cambodia.

After the withdrawal of the Vietnamese from the country, the United Nations organized elections in 1993 that were won by Ranariddh's party, formed from a resistance force which had fought against Hun Sen's government.

Hun Sen's party finished a close second in the polls, and with its control of the army and other security organs, forced Ranariddh into a coalition agreement that made the two rivals co-prime ministers.

Their uneasy partnership, which Hun Sen dominated despite his nominal status as junior partner, dissolved with last year's coup. The prince fled Cambodia and did not return until a few months before this year's election.

Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party narrowly won July parliamentary elections, but Ranariddh and his opposition ally Sam Rainsy, alleging widespread fraud and intimidation during the polls, refused to allow the two-thirds vote in parliament needed to approve a new government.

The political deadlock ended Nov 13 when Ranariddh bowed to pressure from the international community and his father the king, and agreed to enter a coalition government.

## Arafat to push for more int'l aid to Palestinians

WASHINGTON, Nov 26: Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat is coming to Washington this weekend for a meeting expected to boost international aid to Palestinians beyond the \$1.2 billion delivered over the past five years, reports AP.

The Clinton administration plans to increase US pledges, which have totaled \$500 million, and to seek more from about 40 countries to be represented at a meeting Monday, including Israel and all Arab states except Syria and Lebanon.

Five years ago, \$2.3 billion was pledged at a similar conference to assist the Palestinians in the West Bank and in Gaza. A total of \$2.1 billion was disbursed.

A State Department official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, declined to specify how much US aid would be pledged at the conference, but the official said an increase is planned, subject to congressional approval.

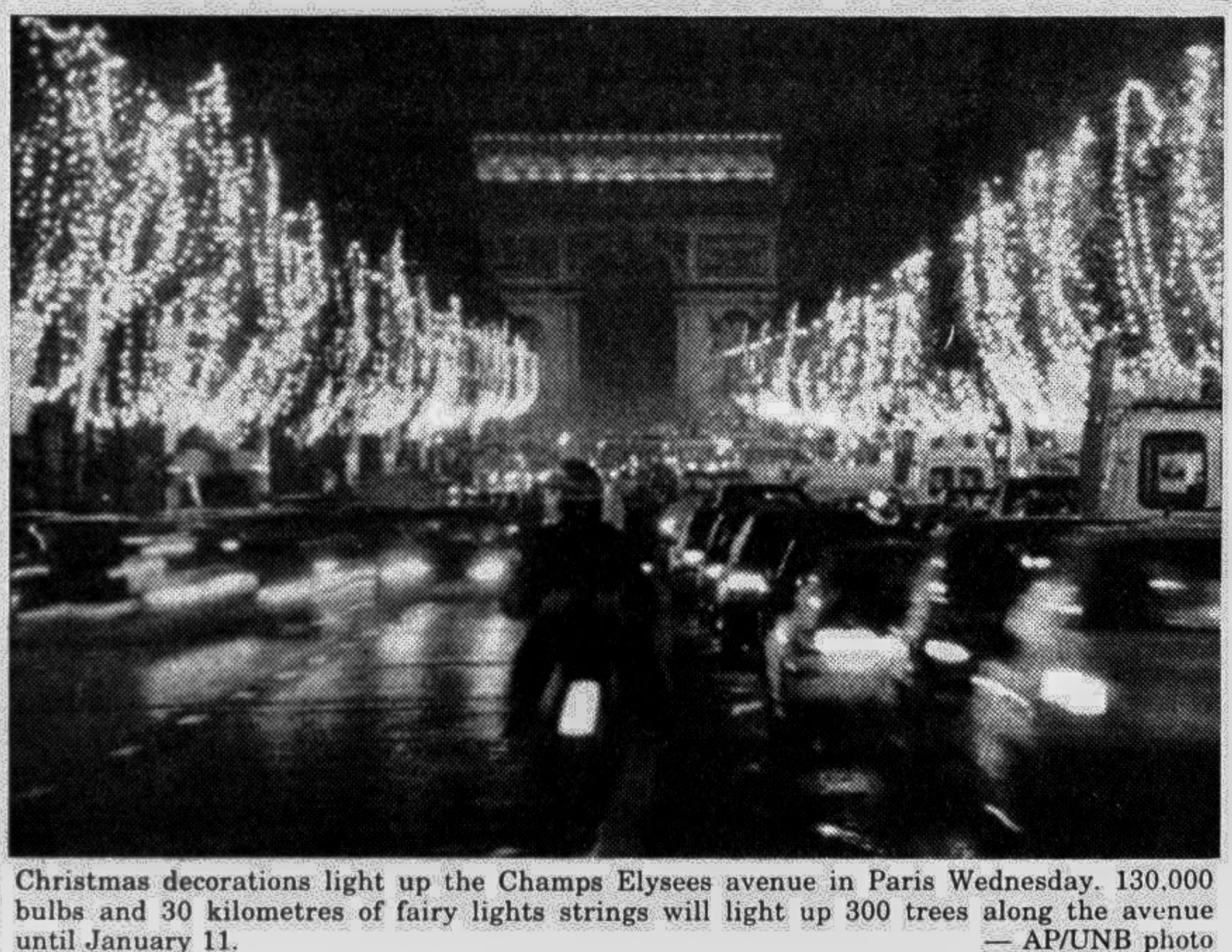
Arafat arrives Saturday to push for public and private aid and to attend the donor meeting.

The official would not say how much Israel was likely to receive from the United States to assist in implementing the partial West Bank withdrawal and security measures under the Wye agreement with the Palestinian Authority.

But two officials said Israel had offered to reduce the annual military and economic aid it receives from the United States by \$60 million a year for the next 10 years. Israel now receives nearly \$3 billion a year from the United States, making it the largest recipient of US aid in the world.

Israel is expected to ask for \$1.2 billion. Israeli officials said last week in Jerusalem, Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman came here last weekend to request aid to fortify Jewish settlements and build roads that bypass Palestinian towns.

Israel has joined the United States in appealing for financial help for the Palestinians.



Christmas decorations light up the Champs Elysees avenue in Paris Wednesday. 130,000 bulbs and 30 kilometres of fairy lights strings will light up 300 trees along the avenue until January 11. — AP/UNB photo

## US criticises Kazakh court ruling

The US State Department criticised the decision of the Kazakhstan Supreme Court to disqualify former Prime Minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin as a candidate for president, AP reports from Washington.

The decision upheld a ruling by the Central Electoral Commission.

**Blast kills 1 in Singapore:** An explosion in the early hours yesterday killed an elderly man in Singapore, and bomb experts have been asked to help in the investigation, a police spokesman said, Reuters reports from Singapore.

Police have not determined what caused the explosion and have called in bomb analysts from the army to help in the investigation, the spokesman said.

**Japan to send aid for China:** Japan is to grant China 350,000 dollars in relief aid for victims of the two quakes that shook Yunnan province last week, the official China Daily reported yesterday, AFP says from Beijing.

The aid will include 200,000 dollars in financial aid and 150,000 dollars in material aid, including tents, blankets and sleeping bags.

**Russian sats in orbit too old:** More than eight out of ten Russian military and civilian satellites now in orbit are too old, according to the Director of the Russian space agency Yuri Koptev, AFP reports from Moscow.

Quoted by ITAR-Tass news agency, Koptev said 82 per cent of Russian satellites had exceeded their normal useful life.

**US praises Albanian gov't:** The United States commended the government and people of Albania for carrying out a peaceful referendum on a new constitution, AP says from Washington.

"We are pleased that so many Albanians exercised their rights as citizens to pass judgement on this fundamental document, US State Department Spokesman James P. Rubin said Wednesday.

**US-DPRK to resume talks in Dec:** The United States and North Korea will resume talks early next month on American concerns about an underground North Korean site suspected by US officials of being used to produce nuclear weapons, the State Department said Wednesday, AP reports from Washington.

Spokesman Lee McCleeny said talks will be held in New York on Dec 4-5 and in Washington on Dec 7-8. No other issues will be on the agenda.

**Tehran police arrest suspects:** Police said Wednesday they had arrested several suspects in connection with the murder of an opposition figure and his wife during the past week, AP reports from Tehran.

The body of Dariush Foruhar, leader of the People's Party of Iran, and his wife, Parvaneh, were found with stab wounds on Sunday.

**Bomb blast kills 2 in Lebanon:** Hezbollah guerrillas detonated a roadside bomb next to an Israeli patrol near the border in southern Lebanon overnight, killing two soldiers, officials said yesterday, AP reports from Marjayoun.

The bomb was apparently set off by remote control as the patrol passed between the villages of Houla and Markaba in the Israeli-occupied zone of southern Lebanon, Lebanese security officials.

**World War II POWs lose court battle:** A group of World War II prisoners of war lost their demand for compensation at a Tokyo court yesterday for the suffering they endured at the hands of Japanese troops, JUI press news agency said, AFP reports from Tokyo.

Some 22,000 British, American, Australian and New Zealand veterans had each demanded 20,000 dollars plus legal costs in a huge group action first brought in early 1995.

**Annan to visit Libya next week:** Secretary-General Kofi Annan said Wednesday that he is considering a trip to Libya next week that might help close a deal to try two Libyan suspects in the Pan Am Lockerbie case, AP reports from United Nations.

Annan is travelling to North Africa beginning Thursday to resume a visit he cut short Nov. 12 to deal with the Iraq crisis.

## Global warming may destroy all coral reefs by year 2050

SYDNEY, Nov 26: Global warming has devastated many of the world's coral reefs, with most facing complete destruction in as little as 50 years, international marine scientists warned Thursday, reports AP.

Reefs worldwide, some with coral more than 600 years old, have suffered this year from a mass bleaching brought on by sea surface temperatures higher than at "any other time in the modern record."

"Global coral bleaching and die-off was unprecedented in 1998 in geographic extent, depth and severity," the International Tropical Marine Ecosystems Management Symposium (ITMEMS) said in a statement.

"Current projections of global warming suggest there will be increased frequency of coral bleaching and coral mortality."

The ITMEMS have based their evidence on new satellite data from America's National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration.

It shows an unexpected sea warming trend, especially in the tropics. Coral polyps live on the upper edge of their temperature tolerance and any heat increase damages them.

"This means that the increase by about two degrees Celsius predicted by the independent panel on climate change for the next 50 years would pose a serious threat," the symposium said.

Affected corals turn white, many never recover and breeding can be affected in those that survive.

Countries with the worst-hit reefs are Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia and the islands of Palau.

In some areas 90 per cent of the reef has died, large areas of Australia's Great Barrier Reef marine park were bleached earlier this year, with mortality rates ranging from zero to 70 per cent.

Only the central Pacific Ocean has been spared from the die-off.

"Reefs in the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Kenya and Tanzania are devastated with shallow reefs looking like graveyards," ITMEMS said.

This will impact severely on the livelihoods of millions of people.

Fisheries, tourism, shore protection and the biodiversity of reefs would also be affected, the scientists said.

## Wartime brutalities Obuchi may offer apology to Jiang

TOKYO, Nov 26: In a bid to improve ties between Asia's two largest powers, Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi on Thursday was expected to offer visiting Chinese President Jiang Zemin an apology for Japan's invasion and brutal occupation of China earlier this century, reports AP.

The summit meeting comes during the first visit by a Chinese head of state to Japan since World War II. Relations have been strained for decades by Cold War tensions and disputes over Japan's imperialist legacy.

But the two nation's leaders hope to lay the foundation for friendlier interaction in the 21st century by pledging increased cooperation both in the political and economic arenas.

Jiang was scheduled to exchange greetings late Thursday with Emperor Akihito at the Imperial Palace in central Tokyo before holding summit talks with Prime Minister Obuchi at the ornate Akasaka State Guesthouse where he is staying for part of his six-day trip.

Earlier, he held a breakfast meeting with six former Japanese leaders, including Obuchi's immediate predecessor, ex-premier Ryutaro Hashimoto. Jiang arrived late Wednesday on a flight from Beijing.

The Chinese president had hoped to return home with an unequivocal expression of remorse from Tokyo for the murder and carnage by Japanese troops that invaded China in the 1930s.

Local news reports say Obuchi will offer a spoken apology accompanied by a more indirectly worded expression of regret in a formal joint statement. Yet neither leader will actually sign the statement, something which the Japanese press reported as a highly irregular move.

A spokesperson for Japan's Foreign Ministry said a signing ceremony was an option which both sides decided to forgo because, unlike a formal treaty, the statement is simply a political declaration by the two heads of state.

Japanese officials remain wary that too explicit an apology could open the floodgates to limitless demands for compensation from victims of atrocities. Still, Obuchi's oral remarks will be the fullest expression of sorrow to date.

Last month, Obuchi offered visiting South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung a similarly worded expression of remorse for Japan's 1910-1945 colonial rule over the Korean Peninsula. But Obuchi and Kim also signed a joint statement.

## Are abortion-linked killings in US a new terrorism?

By Farhan Haq

NEW YORK, The increase in abortion-linked violence in the United States has led to the question of whether the anti-abortion movement is involved with the growing terrorist fringe, reports IPS.

Recent events — from a federal manhunt for Eric Robert Rudolph, suspected of bombing abortion clinics as well as planning the 1996 bombing at the Atlanta Olympic Games, to the search for the killer of Doctor Barnett Slepian, a doctor based in Rochester, New York, who was gunned down in front of his family.

Slepian was just the latest doctor to perform abortions who has been shot at or killed in the period preceding Veteran's Day, a US holiday commemorating the world wars which has also become an annual occasion for "pro-lifers" to mourn what they consider the deaths of the "unborn" — that is, aborted fetuses.

Meanwhile, on Nov 12, the difficulty in catching Rudolph became apparent when an FBI agent at the North Carolina headquarters of the manhunt was shot at and slightly wounded.

Rudolph — whom the FBI suspects of carrying out a Jan. 29 abortion clinic bombing in Birmingham, Alabama, which killed one security guard, as well as the Olympics blast, and two other bombings — is believed to be at large in North Carolina.

The fact that both Rudolph and Kopp, who are known for their extreme anti-abortion views and fundamentalist Christian beliefs, have repeatedly found shelter and even some support for their political views underscores how strongly even radical right-wing beliefs are accepted in the United States, some analysts argue.

Rudolph's actions "really shows there's been a definite linkage between the militia groups and anti-choice activists," says Chris Freeman, a researcher on militia groups for the Atlanta-based Centre for Democratic Renewal. "In North Carolina, Rudolph has a lot of support for his views."

Freeman contends that the small, but violent, right-wing US militia movement has gradually been incorporating anti-abortion beliefs into its other concerns, such as its opposition to taxes, minorities, US government regulations and a "New World Order" of government elites.

Some signs of a link between the radical militias and the violent fringe of the anti-abortion movement have surfaced in the Rudolph and Slepian cases. Rudolph, according to the FBI, is linked to four bombings: the 1996 Olympics attack, in which one person was killed and more than 100 injured; the 1997 bombings of an abortion clinic and lesbian bar in Atlanta; and the Birmingham abortion clinic blast.

In addition, FBI officials have connected him to several letters by the "Army of God" that came out following those attacks, which declared an extreme opposition to abortion and homosexuality.

The Slepian murder, meanwhile, is one of several shootings of doctors who perform abortions that have occurred near the US-Canadian border around Veteran's Day in recent years.