

Sexual harassment settlement

Clinton sends cheque for \$ 850,000 to Paula Jones

WASHINGTON, Jan 13: President Bill Clinton mailed a cheque for \$850,000 to Paula Jones on Tuesday to settle her sexual harassment allegations, officially ending the sensational legal battle that cast his presidency into crisis, reports AP.

In the week his Senate impeachment trial was to resume, the president drew about \$375,000 from his and Hillary Rodham Clinton's personal funds and got the rest of the settlement, about \$475,000, from an insurance policy, a White House official told The Associated Press.

This ends it. The check is being fed-exped to Bill McMillan, one of Mrs. Jones' lawyers, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The official said the personal funds were drawn from the Clinton's blind trust, which was valued in their financial disclosure statement at between \$1 million and about \$5 million. None of the money was drawn from his legal defense fund, which raises money from private citizens to defray his

legal bills, the official said. While the check ends the litigation, the fallout from the controversy still haunts the president. Mrs. Jones' lawsuit brought to light the president's affair with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky and set in motion a criminal investigation that resulted in a historic House vote last month to impeach Clinton.

The president files his trial brief on Wednesday, and House prosecutors on Thursday will begin presenting to the Senate their case that the president obstructed justice in the Jones lawsuit and lied about it before a federal grand jury.

Clinton reached a settlement with Mrs. Jones on Nov. 13 after four years of litigation.

Under that settlement, Clinton didn't admit any wrongdoing or apologize and simply agreed to make a cash settlement to Mrs. Jones, a former Arkansas state worker. Mrs. Jones alleged that Clinton, when he was governor of Arkansas, made a crude advance in a room at a Little Rock hotel in 1991.

Saddam adopts more aggressive tactics in no-fly zones

WASHINGTON, Jan 13: Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has adopted a much more aggressive posture in recent weeks by nearly doubling the number of mobile surface-to-air missile sites in the northern and southern no-fly zones and using them to threaten US and British planes, reports AP.

The Iraqi aircraft also sent warplanes into the two off-limit zones at least 66 times in the past two weeks, said a senior defence official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Iraqi aircraft seem to be employing tactics aimed at entrapping the US and British warplanes keeping watch over most of Iraqi airspace, the official said.

Instead of just one or two aircraft darting in and out of the no-fly zones in a cat-and-mouse game, US and British warplanes now are being harassed by several aircraft at the same time — such as an armed helicopter and a fighter plane.

"Iraq previously used no-fly zone violations as a lure," the official said. "Now, they seem to be used as a distraction," while

other Iraqi planes approach from a different angle. This also may bring the allied aircraft within range of Saddam's anti-aircraft missile batteries.

"He's becoming much more aggressive" with the type of tactics his military is employing, said the official, who has access to intelligence reports about the conditions US and British aircraft face in the no-fly zones.

The northern no-fly zone was set up in 1991 north of the 36th parallel to keep Saddam from attacking Kurds with his aircraft. The southern zone was set up in 1992 to protect southern Shi'ite Muslims and prohibit attacks against Iraq's southern neighbours.

Since the US and British air attacks against Iraq in mid-December, the nine surface-to-air missile sites in the no-fly zones have increased to 17.

The exact size of his arsenal isn't entirely clear, but the Iraqi leader is known to have some 110 operational missile launchers. US officials said Tuesday they have been unable to account for 13 of those.

Prior to the 1991 Gulf War, Saddam had amassed about 7,000 surface-to-air anti-aircraft missiles, the official said.

Many of Saddam's surface-to-air missile batteries are mobile, and therefore nearly impossible to detect until they turn on their radar. In defence, US and British aircraft fire anti-radiation missiles, which follow the radar beam to its source to destroy the missile battery.

In at least 12 cases in recent weeks, Iraqis have aimed missiles at the coalition aircraft, but often without turning on their radar so that the Iraqi sites can't be targeted.

No US or British aircraft have been harmed in the latest encounters.

In the latest confrontation early Tuesday, an F-16CJ patrolling the northern no-fly zone near Mosul, 400 km north of Baghdad, encountered and active radar site, and fired a HARM anti-radiation missile at it.

The US Air Force aircraft returned to its base in Incirlik, Turkey, unharmed, and it is

still unclear whether the missile took out the radar, said Pentagon spokesman Capt Michael Doubleday.

Doubleday acknowledged the situation is far different now, in comparison to that in December, when the Iraqis put up no resistance to the four days of US and British air strikes.

"The Iraqi approach has changed. Our reactions have been appropriate and responsive to the provocations," Doubleday said. "What's changed in the last several weeks, is a decision evidently of Saddam Hussein, to challenge the no-fly zones."

He added that Iraq's "overall goal" is to "get rid of all restrictions on Iraq, such as the sanctions imposed by the United Nations in the wake of the Persian Gulf War, and the inspections geared towards curbing Iraq's development of weapons of mass destruction."

No matter what Saddam's intent, the spokesman added, the United States will continue to enforce the no-fly zones and take appropriate action to defend its air crews.

US penalises 3 Russian institutions for aiding others develop N-arms

WASHINGTON, Jan 13: The United States imposed penalties on a Moscow university and two other Russian institutions Tuesday, accusing Russia of failing to stop its scientists from helping Iran and other states from developing nuclear weapons, reports AP.

National Security adviser Sandy Berger, in announcing the economic sanctions, said Russia needs an export control system that is "designed to work and does."

"Only Russia can police its own borders, factories and technology industries," he said while asserting the Clinton administration's authority to act against foreign companies or agencies that "violate international non-proliferation standards."

The penalties are against Mendeleev Chemical Technical University in Moscow, the Moscow Aviation Institute, and the Scientific Research and Design Institute of Power and Technology. The first two receive Russian gov-

ernment funding, according to administration sources.

The sanctions will ban all US exports to the companies, all imports to the United States and any US government assistance or procurement contracts with the companies.

In July, the administration penalised seven other enterprises, some of which had ties to the Russian government. They were accused of selling sensitive weapons technology to Iran, Libya and North Korea.

In imposing the penalties, the administration did not specify the allegations against the three Russian institutions. But the action signalled continuing concerns over the spread of nuclear technology to rogue states and terrorists.

There was no immediate response from Moscow. Offices of the affected institutions were closed for the day when Berger made the announcement.

Lockhart spokesman Joe Lockhart said a suggestion that the United States "grape" is really with the Kremlin and not with the individual entities.

Trial judge amends some charges against Anwar

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 13: The judge in the trial of sacked deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim amended some of the charges against him Wednesday at the request of the prosecutors, reports AP.

The defence sharply criticised the move, which appeared to make it easier for the prosecution to prove four charges of corruption against Anwar. All four relate to his alleged abuse of power by forcing police to help cover up his alleged illegal sex acts.

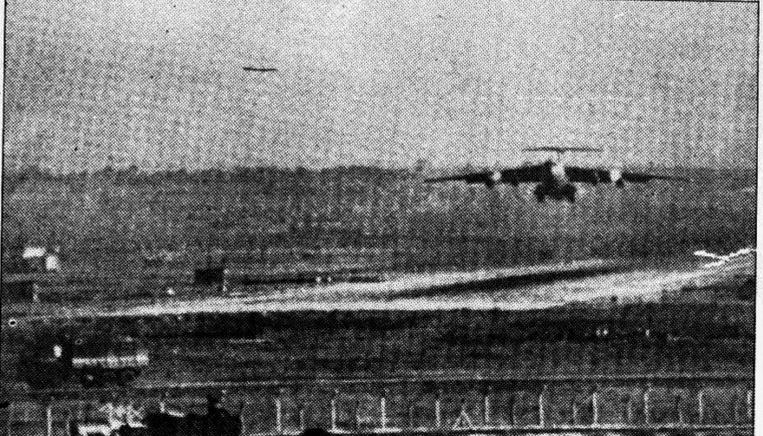
In the original charges, the prosecutors said that Anwar had abused his powers to protect himself from any criminal proceedings arising out of his alleged illegal sexual acts. But in the amended version the prosecutors say he abused his office to protect his reputation, according to the national news agency, Bernama.

That, defence lawyers said, would make it easier for the prosecution to prove abuse of power without having to establish that Anwar did actually indulge in illegal sex.

However, the full effect of the development on the trial was not immediately clear. Defence lawyers sought an adjournment to discuss the changes and to try to understand why the prosecutors requested that the charges be amended after resting their case last week.

The hearing resumed briefly before it was adjourned until Thursday when the defence planned to begin its submissions.

Anwar also faces one more count of corruption and five charges of illegal sexual acts, including sodomy. None of those charges were dropped or changed on Wednesday.



An allied early warning AWACS plane takes off on Tuesday from Incirlik Airbase, which houses a US-led allied air force enforcing a no-fly zone in northern Iraq. A US F-16 patrolling the no-fly zone fired a missile at an Iraqi radar site on Tuesday. — AP/UNB photo

Police step up security at Pak, Chinese missions in New Delhi

NEW DELHI, Jan 13: Indian police have stepped up security at the Chinese and Pakistani embassies in New Delhi to prevent possible attacks by various activist groups, officials said today, reports AP.

Deputy police commissioner T N Mohan said a "strong contingent" had been placed "round-the-clock" at the two foreign missions because of the growing threats of attacks.

Units of a special police taskforce backed by paramilitaries have been deployed in the Chanakyapuri diplomatic district following the storming of the Chinese Embassy on January 7 by Tibetan exiles in India.

Sources said security had also been beefed up at the Pakistani mission, following threats by a Hindu extremist group to disrupt an upcoming tour by the Pakistani cricket team.

Italy opposes NATO intervention in Kosovo despite Albania's call

TIRANA, Jan 13: Italian Defense Minister Carlo Scognamiglio said Tuesday he opposes NATO intervention in Kosovo at the present time despite Albanian calls for the alliance to halt the crisis, reports AP.

Scognamiglio arrived here Tuesday and met with Prime Minister Pandeli Majko and Albanian defense chief, Luan Hajdaraga. Earlier Tuesday, Majko said the government supports diplomatic efforts to resolve the Kosovo crisis but believes NATO must at some point intervene.

"I don't think that NATO intervention is the right step to take," Scognamiglio told reporters. "We should try all political measures to find a solution for this critical situation in Kosovo."

Italy is a member of the six-nation Contact Group, which spearheads diplomatic efforts

in Yugoslavia and its former republics. Other members are the United States, Russia, Germany, France and Britain.

The crisis in neighboring Kosovo has worsened since ethnic Albanian rebels seized eighty Yugoslav soldiers last week and demanded they be exchanged for ethnic Albanians held by the Serbs. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe said Tuesday the hostages would be released, but refused to discuss a time or other details.

"Irresponsible acts could bring an escalation of this conflict," the Italian minister said. "And this conflict could extend through the region."

Defense ministers of southeastern Europe signed an agreement in Athens on Tuesday to establish a regional security force. Albania will be among the contributors.

9 saved from sinking ship in Lanka

Sri Lankan rescue teams saved seven Indians and two Sri Lankans from a sinking ship off Colombo's port after getting distress calls, the harbour master said Wednesday, AP reports from Colombo.

The 15-metre, 1,400-ton bunker vessel Humbrisa-4 was docked outside the Colombo port waiting to get space for loading. "We got calls from the crew saying the ship was sinking. They were cleaning the ship and in the process may have caused the leak," Captain S Chinniah said. After rescuing the crew, Colombo's port authorities stopped the ship from sinking completely. Efforts are being made to bring the ship to the dockyard for repairs.

14 die in Chinese factory blast

Fourteen people were killed and three injured when a two-storey fireworks factory in China's eastern Anhui province was levelled by a massive explosion, the Beijing Morning Post said yesterday, AFP reports from Beijing.

The dead in the January 9 blast included 11 elementary school students who worked part-time at the factory, and a four-year-old boy. The workshop owner and his wife were also killed, while two other students and the owner's sister-in-law were injured.

UN monitors to stay in Sierra Leone

The Security Council decided Tuesday to maintain a UN observer force to Sierra Leone for another two months, but acknowledged the team might have to be reduced in light of fighting between government and rebel troops, AP reports from United Nations.

Already, the United Nations has pulled its 70-member observer team out of the country to neighbouring Conakry, Guinea, to escape rebel attacks on the capital Freetown.

Snow disrupts traffic in France

Snow blanketed northern France Tuesday, severely disrupting traffic during the evening rush hour a day after a winter storm blocked roads and cut power in the centre of the country, AP reports from Paris.

A dusting of snow caused at least 300 kilometres of traffic jams in the Parisian Ile-de-France region. Hundreds of roads were blocked in Normandy, hit by several inches of snow, as well as in the northern Pas-de-Calais region, the Paris area and most of the country's northern half.

UN plane wreckage found in Angola

The wreckage of a UN plane that disappeared earlier this month over Angola has been found by rebels, a United Nations official said Tuesday, AFP reports from the United Nations.

Benon Sevan said he was told in Paris by an official from the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) that the rebels had found the wreck and were ready to send a rescue party to the site. Sevan would not say now he made contact with the rebel official.

US efforts on to help implement PA, Israel peace agreement

RAMALLAH, Jan 13: With a peace deal he helped broker in tatters, the US envoy to the Mideast met with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Benjamin Netanyahu Tuesday in an attempt to restore the deal and resume negotiations, reports AP.

Dennis Ross met the Israeli prime minister in Jerusalem for one hour before traveling to the West Bank city of Ramallah for talks with Arafat and his staff.

Ross said the talks focused on implementing the Wye River land-for-security memorandum signed between the parties at the White House in October.

Netanyahu froze implementation last month, arguing that the Palestinians violated the accord. The Palestinians denied the charges and said Netanyahu took the step because he faces a difficult campaign for re-election May 17 and wants to appease nationalist voters opposed to a troop withdrawal.

"Clearly it is very important from our perspective to have the Wye agreement implemented in all its parts," Ross told reporters after meeting Arafat. "I am not going to say that there are no problems in terms of trying to get this done but I think it is essential that we find a way to get the agreement implemented," he said.

Earlier in Tel Aviv, Ross said the United States, which brokered the last two interim peace agreements including the Wye accord between Israel and the Palestinians, will play a much less active role in talks on a permanent accord.

A final peace agreement would draw the final border between Israel and the Palestinian entity and determine the status of Jerusalem, Jewish settlements and Palestinian refugees. "Permanent status is not

something that should be mediated," said US Mideast coordinator Dennis Ross who has spent hundreds of hours shuttling between Israeli and Palestinian negotiators in attempts to get interim peace agreements implemented.

In final status talks, "the two sides are dealing with existential questions that must be negotiated by them," Ross said in a roundtable discussion organised by the Peres Center for Peace.

But there were signs that the US, which raised its profile in Mideast negotiations after Netanyahu came to power in May 1996, was already disentangling itself from the crisis-plagued role of mediator.

US Secretary of State

Madeleine Albright did not include Israel in a planned visit to the region at the end of the month and Israeli Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon suggested it was a snub because Israel was holding up the accord.

"We have a very high regard for the secretary. We would be very happy if she would visit Israel but we do not pay for a visit with things we are not able to give up," he told reporters.

Sharon defended his government's actions telling Israel radio that according to the Wye agreement, "Israeli implementation will always follow Palestinian implementation. Unfortunately, the Palestinians are not carrying out their commitments."

Kissinger's offer of secrets

China blasts coverage of documents in media

BEIJING, Jan 13: The Chinese government said today that blanket media coverage of documents which said former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had offered secret information to China in the 1970s was an attempt to destabilise Sino-US ties, reports AP.

"Some people have manipulated this intentionally, this shows clearly they have ulterior motives," a foreign ministry spokesman said.

"History proves that the resumption of the US-China relationship is not only conducive to the common interests of the two peoples but also in the interest of world peace and stability," he added.

However, the spokesman made no direct comment on the content of the documents re-

leased Sunday by the US national security archives at George Washington University.

According to the documents, Kissinger repeatedly offered Beijing information, high speed computers and a "hot line" to advise the Chinese of Soviet troop movements starting in October 1971.

President Richard Nixon's secretary of state also offered Beijing sensitive information on US-Soviet relations, the documents said.

The papers include transcripts and summaries of meetings between Kissinger, Nixon and former Chinese leader Mao Zedong and premier Zhou Enlai.

The initiative was part of the Nixon administration's "triangular diplomacy" with Beijing and Moscow.



Kuwait's Minister of Defence Sheikh Salem Al Sabah during an impromptu press conference Tuesday outside the Parliament Hall in Kuwait City. Sheikh Al Sabah emerged from a closed door Parliament session in which the current crisis with Iraq was discussed. — AP/UNB photo

Ranariddh for trying Khmer leaders in int'l tribunal

PHNOM PENH, Jan 13: Prince Norodom Ranariddh said Thursday that Khmer Rouge leaders held responsible for genocide should be tried in an international court outside the country, reports AP.

Ranariddh, president of the National Assembly and Prime Minister Hun Sen's coalition partner, said he was also open to a national tribunal but that the international community must be involved.

"My own opinion is that we should have a trial outside the country, but if the government or public opinion says we must convene the court inside the country, I would at least like to ask for a foreign judge," Ranariddh told reporters.

United Nations legal experts will recommend next month how and where a tribunal can be held for surviving Khmer Rouge leaders for their roles in causing the deaths of as many as 2 million people when they ruled between 1975 and 1979.

Several international experts, including the UN's top human rights official in Cambodia, favour a Khmer Rouge

tribunal inside the troubled country so survivors of their crimes against humanity will see that justice is being done.

The Cambodian government requested UN assistance to set up a tribunal in 1997, but Hun Sen's support for a trial is in doubt after he refused to arrest two Khmer Rouge leaders, Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea, who defected to the government last month.

Hun Sen initially told his country the two guerrilla chiefs would not be tried in the interests of not rekindling a long civil war, but later reversed his stance as national and international outrage mounted.

Ranariddh defended the prime minister's actions, saying reconciliation and peace were the government's first priorities and that work on a trial will continue after the UN experts release their report.

The prince also repeated his suggestion that Khmer Rouge leaders be given a general amnesty after trial upon approval by the National Assembly and the parliament's as-yet-unformed upper house.

Mamata threatens to withdraw support to BJP-led govt

JALPAIGURI, West Bengal, Jan 13: The Trinamool Congress leader, Mamata Banerjee, today threatened to withdraw support to the BJP-led central government if the railway ministry did not implement the Eklakhi-Balughat railway project in north Bengal, reports PTI.

Talking to newsmen here after addressing a public meeting, she said that the project has been hanging for a long time and it is time now the central government took a decision on it.

The Trinamool leader's threat came amidst indications that her party will join the central government during the next ministerial reshuffle. Mamata, however, told the newsmen that joining the central ministry will depend on a decision taken by the party's working committee in Calcutta in two or three days.

Laden renews call for holy war against US

WASHINGTON, Jan 13: The alleged mastermind of the bloody bombings of two US embassies in Africa renewed call for holy war on Americans, Jews and Christians in an interview aired by CBS Television Tuesday, reports AP.

Through an interpreter, exiled Saudi millionaire Osama bin Laden said "all the Americans are our enemies, not just the ones who fight us directly but also the ones who pay their taxes."

"We have formed an Islamic front to continue to fight against the Jews and the Christians, we hope that Allah will open the path to fight against them," said Bin Laden in the interview that CBS said was conducted two weeks ago in Afghanistan where he lives in exile.

Britain won't outlaw Islamist training camps

LONDON, Jan 13: The British government has known about the existence of Islamist training camps in Britain run by extremist groups, but decided that it cannot outlaw them, The Financial Times reported today, says AP.

A confidential foreign office document obtained by the London newspaper reveals that British police have decided not to take action against the camps, the paper said.

"Her Majesty's government was aware of the existence of so-called training camps in the UK and these were investigated by appropriate authorities. These investigations revealed no illegal activities," the document says.

The foreign office document also discloses that police are investigating allegations that the kidnap of 16 western tourists in Yemen on December 28 was directed from Britain, according to the Financial Times.

Off the Record



Romanian President Emil Constantinescu, right, dances with actress Rona Hartner, left, in a Bucharest club during election campaign in October 1996. Romanian newspapers Monday carried stories that Constantinescu has had a love affair with the 25-year-old actress. The president's advisors and Hartner denied the news reports. — AP/UNB photo

Worst dressed women

LOS ANGELES: Linda Tripp, a main player in the sex-and-perjury scandal linking Monica Lewinsky with President Bill Clinton, on Tuesday topped the annual Blackwell List of Worst Dressed Women, reports AFP.

"Linda's bad fashion tripp is beyond debate. she looks like a sheepdog in drag," the fashion critic who goes by the name of Blackwell said of the woman who taped Lewinsky's comments about her relationship with Clinton.

Madonna did not fare much better, Blackwell called her "a neo-Gothic fright — a glitzy gargoyle searching for a ray of fashion light."

"Titanic" co-star Kate Winslett was a fashion disaster, he said citing her "gaudy gowns to creepy combat boots. Kate's a fashion panic, in fact, her whole wardrobe should have gone down with the Titanic."

Blackwell was also tough on former "Baywatch" star Carmen Electra. "What's left to say? She's fashion Viagra — in heels." Also on the list are singer and actress Courtney Love, singer Mariah Carey and actresses Marisa Tomei, Sigourney Weaver and Sandra Bullock.

Best Model of the World in trouble

SINGAPORE: A physical education teacher who modelled in her spare time without permission from the government may be in trouble now that she has won an international contest, a newspaper reported Wednesday, reports UNB.

Annetha Ayyavoo, 25, who said she has been modelling as a hobby for five years, usually in charity fashion shows, won the Best Model of the World competition in Turkey last month. The Straits Times reported.

Singaporeans who win an international contest or award are often given patriotic publicity in the government-controlled press of this small republic of 3.1 million people. But the attention soon turned to questions about whether Miss Ayyavoo had gotten permission to model. She was hired last April at the Catholic Junior College.

The Straits Times newspaper said it had asked the Education Ministry about the propriety of Miss Ayyavoo's hobby, which she said earned her enough to cover taxi fare and lunch. The reply was that civil servants seeking part-time work must seek prior approval from the government ministry.