

## International

Pakistan frees Indian pilot

## India steps up air, ground attacks

DRAS, India, June 4: Indian air and ground offensives intensified against armed intruders in Kashmir Friday, as the prospects of high-level talks with Pakistan next week failed to arouse optimism about an early end to the Himalayan conflagration, reports AP.

In New Delhi, India weighed a suggestion by Pakistani Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz visit the India capital Monday for talks to defuse the crisis between the two nuclear-armed neighbours.

The political atmosphere was further eased by the release of an Indian pilot Thursday whose fighter jet went down inside Pakistan a week earlier.

In Islamabad, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) handed over Indian fighter pilot K Nachiketa to New Delhi's diplomatic mission overnight after Pakistani authorities released him, the ICRC said today.

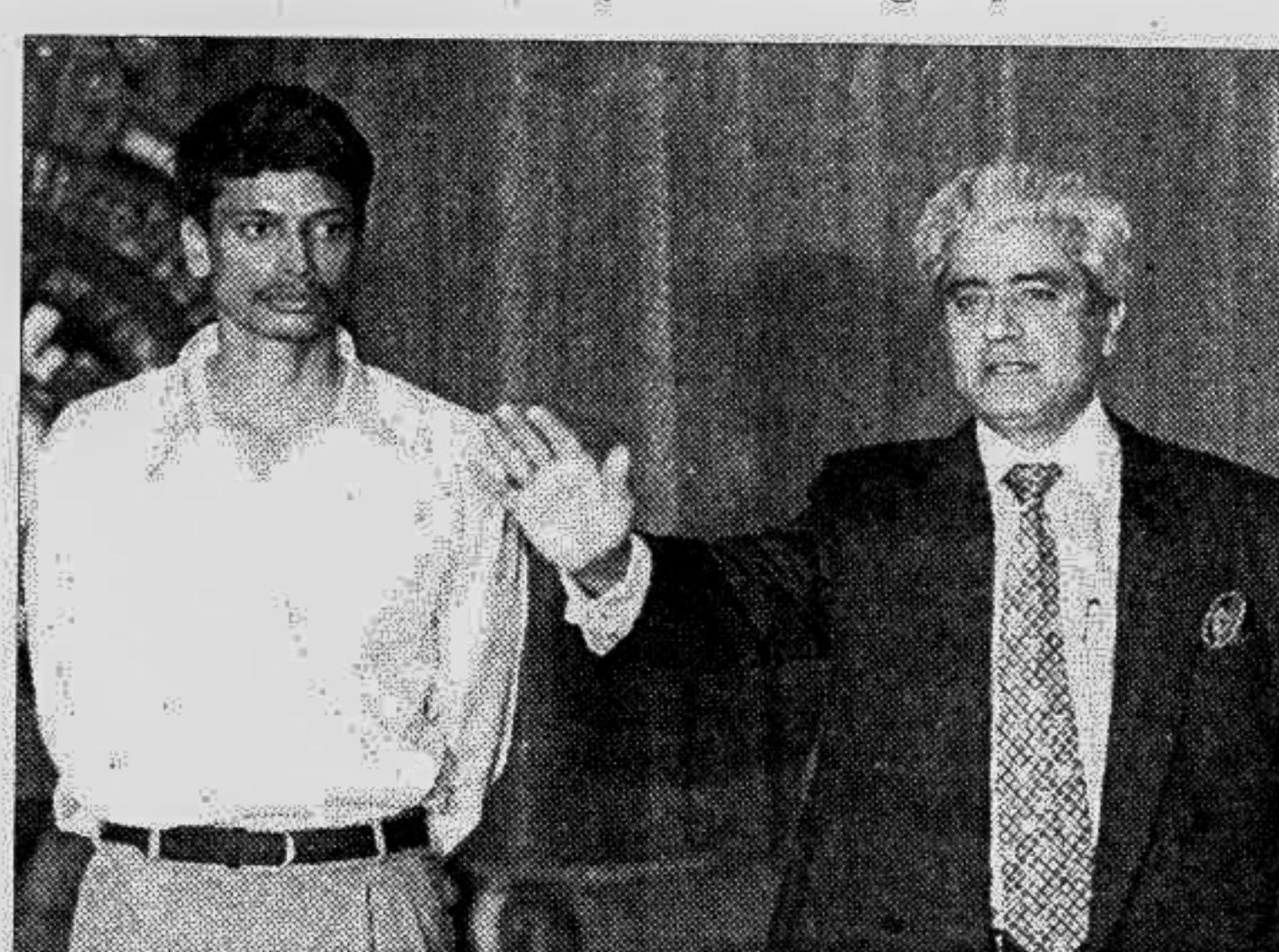
Diplomatic sources said Flight Lieutenant K Nachiketa, who was captured after his MiG fighter jet was shot down on May 27, was still at the Indian mission in Islamabad.

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif earlier said he ordered Nachiketa's release as a gesture of goodwill to ease border tensions with India in the disputed Kashmir region.

In Kashmir, there was no reflection of what Prime Minister

Nawaz Sharif called peace gestures from Pakistan.

Indian air force jets struck guerilla positions for the 10th straight day, hitting targets on white-capped peaks overlooking an army brigade headquarters near Dras. The crackle of light machine guns could clearly be heard from peaks five kilometers (three miles) away.



Pakistani foreign office spokesman Tariq Attaf (R) stops reporters from asking direct questions about Indian fighter pilot Flight Lieutenant K. Nachiketa (L), in Islamabad on Thursday.

— AFP photo

## NATO bombs Yugoslavia despite approval of peace plan

BELGRADE, June 4: NATO warplanes kept up air strikes over Yugoslavia Friday despite Belgrade's acceptance of a deal to stop the war in Kosovo, as Group of Eight experts completed plans for the next stage in the peace process, reports AFP.

The deal, drawn up by the seven leading industrialised countries and Russia, requires that a Serb troop withdrawal precede any pause in the 10-week-old NATO air campaign.

But Russian President Boris Yeltsin said Friday he saw no reason to continue the strikes, Interfax reported.

There are no reasons to continue NATO's aggression against Yugoslavia, Yeltsin

was quoted as saying in a telephone conversation with German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder. Germany is current chair of the European Union and hosting the two-day EU summit in Cologne.

US President Bill Clinton, however, insisted NATO would keep up pressure. "Until Serb forces begin a verifiable withdrawal from Kosovo, we will continue to pursue diplomacy, but we will also continue the military effort that has brought us to this point."

Under the peace plan, the Serb troop withdrawal would be followed by the deployment of a peacekeeping force, the return of Kosovo refugees and the establishment of an interim ad-

ministration.

The Serbian parliament approved the deal Thursday.

On Friday, NATO planes pounded Belgrade's northwestern suburb of Batajica in an hour-long alert in the capital. Three missiles were dropped on the Batajica area, where a military airfield is located and which has been a regular NATO target.

In Brussels, NATO confirmed it had kept up strikes on Serb forces in Kosovo over the past 24 hours but had mounted fewer attacks in the rest of Serbia.

"In Kosovo, allied aircraft struck 21 pieces of artillery, 30 mortar positions, four tanks, 10 armoured personnel carriers,

ers, eight anti-aircraft artillery pieces and other military vehicles," said the NATO statement.

NATO planes, it said, flew a total of 610 missions in the past 24 hours and made 234 bombing runs, compared with 644 and 239 respectively in the preceding 24 hours.

The European Union's envoy on Kosovo, Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari, meanwhile said that once a verifiable Serb withdrawal from Kosovo begins, the air attacks could end in days rather than weeks."

Diplomats in Brussels said Yugoslav military officials had already telephoned NATO's military headquarters at Mons, Belgium, to discuss implementation of the Kosovo peace plan.

## US, Libya talks likely on June 11

UNITED NATIONS, June 4: The United States and Libya are expected to hold face-to-face talks next week, the first step toward re-establishing official contact after diplomatic relations were severed 18 years ago, diplomats said.

At Washington's request, Secretary-General Kofi Annan arranged the meeting, which is expected to take place Friday, June 11, in Annan's chambers, the diplomats said Thursday, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Deputy US Ambassador Peter Burleigh and Libyan Ambassador Abuzeid Omar Dorda

## Pinochet extradition case to start Sept 27

LONDON, June 4: A London court Friday fixed September 27 for the start of Spain's extradition case against Chile's former dictator, Augusto Pinochet, over alleged human rights abuses, reports AFP.

The committal hearing, which marks the start of the extradition proceedings, had provisionally been set for the first week of October, but the judge then decided to advance the session to late September.

The hearing is expected to last five days, defence lawyers told London's Bow Street magistrate's court.

Lawyers for the former dictator, who has been held in

Britain for seven months, last week failed to win the right to challenge a decision by British Home Secretary Jack Straw that Pinochet should face extradition proceedings.

The 83-year-old former dictator's health may yet be an obstacle to his extradition. This week, one of the general's associates, Fernando Barros, confirmed Chilean press reports that Pinochet was suffering from a urological condition.

The extradition case is expected to last months, with defence lawyers able to appeal at various stages in the procedure.

## Bid to attack US consulate:

Turkish police killed two members of a radical leftist group overnight in a shoot-out as the pair were preparing an attack on the United States' Istanbul consulate, state-run Anatolian news agency said today, Reuter reports from Istanbul.

It said two pistols and a shoulder-held anti-tank rocket launcher had been found on the pair who died in a clash with police in the Tepebasi area of the city, close to the US consulate.

The agency gave no details of which of the many shadowy armed far-left groups operating in Turkey's big cities planned to carry out the attack.

**US fighter aircraft crashes:** A US Harrier AV-8 fighter aircraft crashed at the US Kadena air base in Okinawa, southern Japan, on Friday, but the pilot ejected safely, a spokesman at the base said, AFP reports from Tokyo.

The US Marine fighter crashed around 1.30 PM (0330 GMT) within the grounds of the base, and the pilot parachuted to safety, the spokesman said. "The accident is now under investigation," he said. The fighter burst into flames, but the fire was put under control 30 minutes later, according to the Kyodo News Agency.

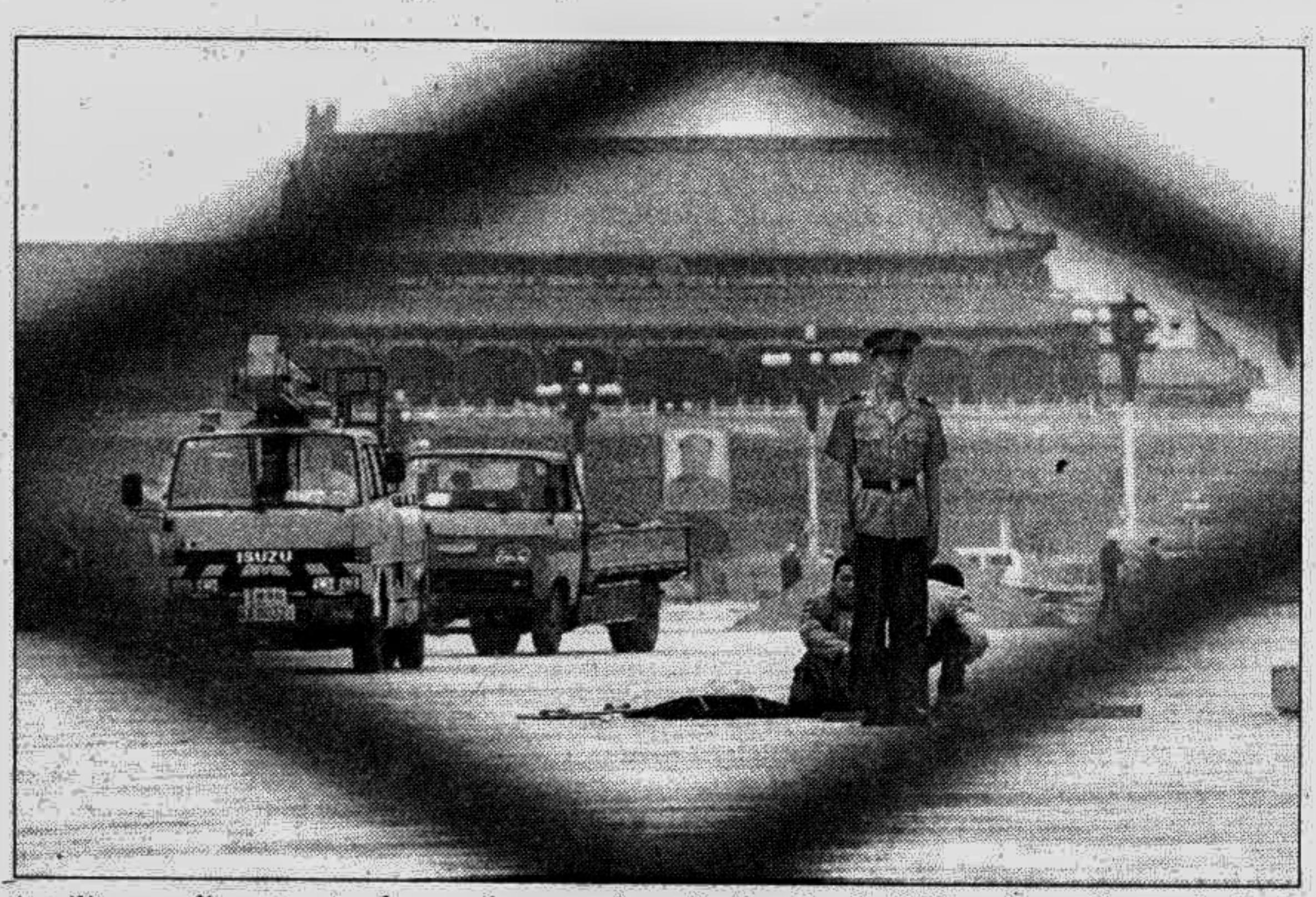
**Queen Noor honoured:** Jordan's Queen Noor was honoured by UNICEF on Thursday for her work in ridding the world of landmines, Reuter reports from Boston.

Like Britain's late Princess Diana, the American-born Queen Noor has become a patron of both the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the US-based Landmine Survivors Network. Before the United Nations' Children's Fund ceremony in Boston, Queen Noor told reporters that the Middle East has "perhaps half the landmines in place" in the world.

**Strong quake shakes Taiwan:** A strong earthquake rattled Taipei and other parts of northern Taiwan early Friday, but no injuries or damage were reported, the Central Weather Bureau said, AP reports from Taipei.

The epicenter of the earthquake with a magnitude of 5.8 was located in the Pacific Ocean, 123 kilometers southeast of Taipei, the bureau's Seismology Center reported. The quake shook buildings in Taipei for about a minute after it struck at 12.11 am (16.11 GMT Thursday).

## China clamps down on activists as world remembers Tiananmen massacre



A military policeman stands guard near a fence in the closed-off Tiananmen Square in Beijing yesterday, which is still under renovation.

— AFP photo

BEIJING, June 4: Chinese authorities enforced tight security Friday for the 10th anniversary of the crackdown on pro-democracy protesters in Tiananmen Square, but could not prevent international attention from returning to the bloodshed, reports AFP.

Most of the square was closed off for repairs, and police observed passers-by with binoculars from the tops of surrounding buildings.

A few isolated attempts at protest appeared through the day to crack the veneer of normality, but were quickly suppressed.

A middle-aged man wearing a black armband rode a bicycle past the portrait of Mao Zedong on the north side of the square, unnoticed by security officers.

But a man handing out leaflets was pounced on quickly by dozens of police who chased him across the main boulevard, running past the square, before spirit him away in a car and confiscating his satchel.

Several foreign journalists were also detained briefly after a man unfolded an umbrella with slogans written on it in front of Mao's portrait.

An estimated 42 pro-democ-

## India to build advance heavy water reactor

PUNE, June 4: India would soon be building an advance heavy water reactor, the only one of its kind in the world, using thorium as nuclear fuel, director of BARC Dr Anil Kakodkar said yesterday, reports PTI.

Talking to newsmen a National Defence Academy (NDA) at Khadakwasla here, he said the feasibility design of the reactor is complete and "within the next few years we should be in a position to construct it."

He indicated India's casualties were far higher than the officials figure of 48 dead and 12 missing released by military spokesman Thursday at a formal briefing in New Delhi.

Meanwhile, Kashmiri rebels accused India Friday of using napalm and cluster bombs against their fighters entrenched in the icy Himalayan peaks on India's side of the disputed Kashmir border.

Indian fighter jets, flying at high altitudes, were dropping cluster and napalm bombs, but were missing their targets, said a United Jihad Council spokesman Umar Javed.

"They are flying too high to hit accurately," he said. Javed also accused the Indian military of using chemical weapons in their campaign, which was into its 10th day Friday.

The United Jihad Council, represents 14 Kashmiri rebel groups, including the four main groups said to be fighting in the Kargil battle zone of Indian-held Kashmir.

There was no immediate independent confirmation of the United Jihad Council's claim.



An Indonesian soldier opens fire on a crowd yesterday. Anti-riot troops fired warning shots after a crowd began ripping up flags of Indonesia's ruling Golkar party. They aimed at the crowd once people started to throw rocks at the police.

— AFP photo

## Troops open fire in Jakarta during polls campaign

Suharto was the patron of Golkar, whose members voted him back into power for seven consecutive terms. Golkar was one of only three official parties allowed under Suharto.

The state Radio Republic Indonesia said five people had been injured, but two hospitals contacted by AFP said they had not received any casualties.

Some 200 anti-riot troops opened fire in the air in front of a crowd of less than 1,000 people who had been rippling up party symbols along the roadside.

When the crowd started throwing rocks at the troops, they then fired towards the group, the AFP photographer said.

Police said one motorcycle was burned by the crowd, but declined to give further details.

A witness said another motorcycle and a car were damaged by mobs.

The shooting came on the last day of the largely-peaceful 17-day campaign period before general elections Monday, the first since the fall of former president Suharto in May of last year amid widespread rioting.

## 9 MQM men to die for killing ex-Pak governor

KARACHI, June 4: Illegal immigrants can't work while they appeal their deportation orders, a federal court said.

The 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals, which made the ruling Thursday, overturned a federal judge's 1998 injunction that entitled 19 immigrants to keep their work permits pending court appeals of their deportations.

The convicts belong to the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), an ethnic party representing migrants from India after the partition of the sub-continent in 1947.

Hakeem Mohammad Saeed, a former governor of southern Sindh province, was gunned down along with two other people in the provincial capital of Karachi on October 17 last year.

As anti-terrorism court judge Qamaruddin Bohra announced the verdict, the handcuffed accused recited pro-MQM slogans, clapped made victory signs and denounced "Kangaroo courts," witnesses said.

The nine, who were also fined 100,000 rupees (2,000 dollars) each, have seven days to appeal to the Sindh high court.

Officials said 27 people were declared fugitives in the case, including MQM chief Altaf Hussain, who lives in exile in London.

Lawyers said warrants had been issued against them and they would be tried after their arrests.

The nine convicts were brought to the heavily-guarded court in armoured vehicles, with commandos keeping vigil from rooftops in the area.

The judges said making things difficult for illegal aliens was one of the specific goals of the 1986 law.

Police arrested the gunman in the parking lot Thursday after talking him out of killing himself.

Officers were alerted by a 911 call from inside the Albertsons supermarket as shots were being fired. They confronted a man with a goatee and shaved head who walked out the door with a shotgun.

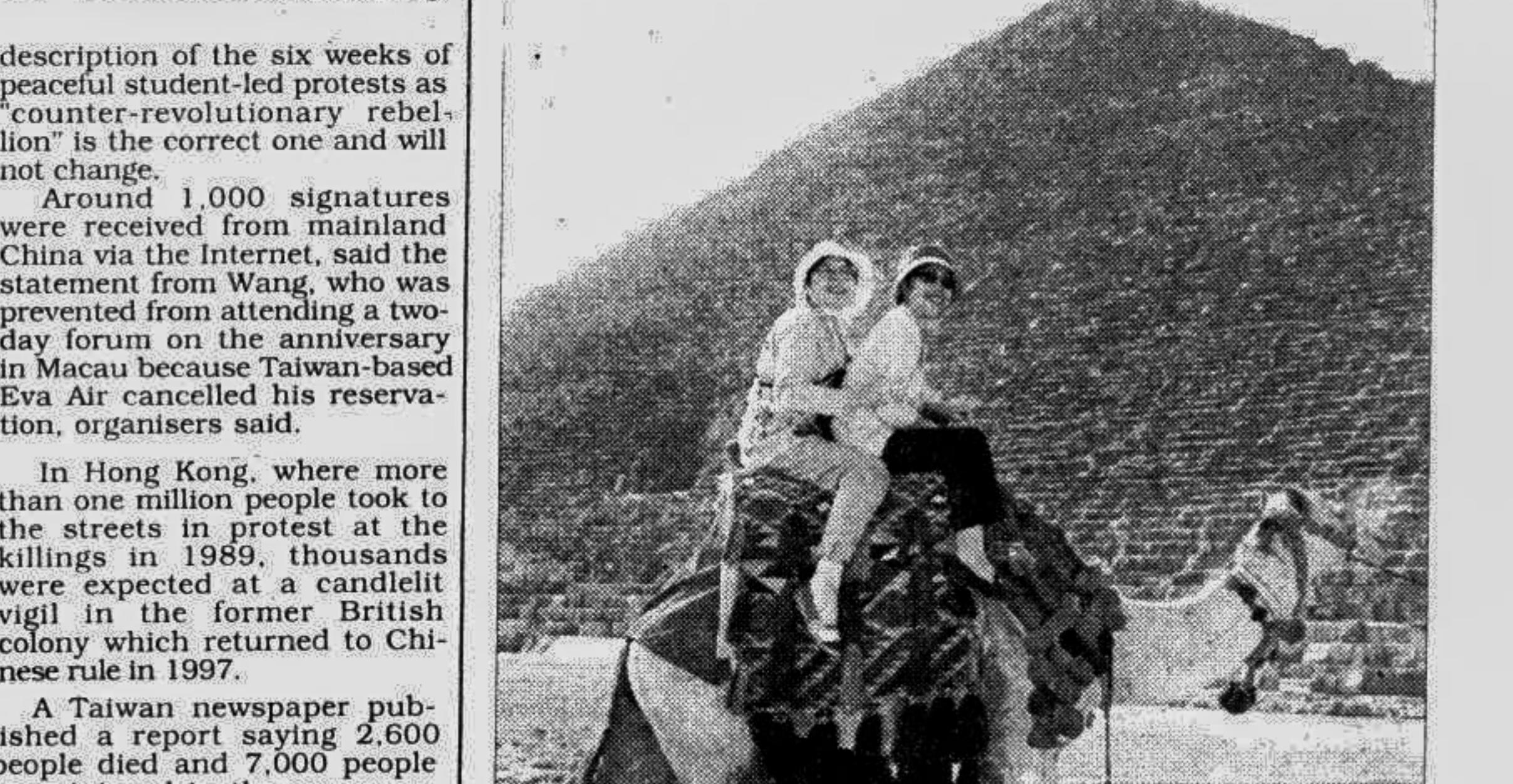
He placed the gun to his head and officers were able to talk him into surrendering. Lt

Rick Alba said. The victims were all shot at point-blank range, Officer Steve Meriwether said. Some were chased.

Zane Floyd, 23, who was honorably discharged from the Marines at Camp Pendleton, California, last July, was arrested for investigation of murder. He worked as a security guard and part-time as a bouncer at a bar.

Investigators were baffled as to what triggered the rampage, Alba said.

Police have not found any connection between Floyd and the victims — three men and a woman — and there was no indication he had had any run-ins at the store.



Japanese tourists, riding a camel, pass on Wednesday in front of the Pyramid of Cheops, the largest of the famous trio on a desert plateau outside Cairo. The pyramid of Cheops reopened to tourists after more than a year of repair work and in the time for millennium celebrations.

— AFP photo