

# World powers turn up heat on Jakarta

AUCKLAND, Sept 8 - World powers Wednesday turned up the heat on Indonesia to stop the bloodshed in East Timor as Indonesian President B. J. Habibie suddenly withdrew from a key regional meeting here, reports AFP.

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright warned Indonesia it would "suffer in a variety of ways" if it failed to deal with escalating violence tearing through East Timor.

"We are calling on the Indonesian government, if it wants to maintain the respect of the international community and be a member in good standing, to take action themselves," Albright said.

If Jakarta failed to take action "we have a number of ways the international community can deal with that... and make it clear to them that they will suffer in a variety of ways," she told CNN.

Reports say Indonesia's own military is orchestrating the violence that has forced tens of thousands of people to flee in

the wake of last week's overwhelming vote for East Timorese independence.

The US Secretary of State was to join informal talks here on East Timor later in the day with British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook and colleagues from Australia, Canada and New Zealand, officials said.

The informal East Timor talks are scheduled to take place on the eve of a wider foreign ministerial meeting on the East Timor crisis early Thursday, officials said.

Albright was here to attend meetings of the 21-member Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.

But she has yet to confirm her attendance at Thursday's emergency conference on East Timor, being organised by New Zealand and Canada on the sidelines of the APEC meetings.

International efforts stumbled when Jakarta announced Indonesia's president will not attend September 12-13 summit, in which he had been expected to join other leaders such as US President Bill Clinton.

"President Habibie cannot come to APEC and will only be represented by the coordinating minister (for economy, finance and industry, Ginanjar Kartasasmita)," Justice Minister Muladi told journalists at parliament.

"The reason is that after considering the agenda, it is felt to be not too strategic," said Muladi, who is also state secretary.

A senior Thai official said some Southeast Asian nations were worried about Cook's attendance at Thursday's scheduled East Timor gathering, but he still expected the Philippines and Singapore to go along.

Details of the meeting are still sketchy but others likely to attend include foreign ministers from Australia, Britain, Canada, Japan and New Zealand, Peru and Chile have also confirmed their attendance.

Cook flew in to Auckland earlier in the day to represent the European Union at the meeting, which was "very supportive of what we are doing

and the very fact that we are having this meeting alongside the APEC meeting," according to McKinnon.

In Canberra, Australian Prime Minister John Howard said the United States was likely to provide logistical support for any multinational peacekeeping force in East Timor.

He said Australian Defence Minister John Moore spoke to US and British Defence Secretaries William Cohen and George Robertson.

"We are confident now that the Americans would provide at least logistical support, which is quite important. Beyond that it is still being studied in Washington," Howard said.

But despite growing calls for international intervention, White House spokesman Joe Lockhart has told reporters in Washington there was still no decision on joining any armed peacekeeping force.

**Killing to go on until UN leaves: Dili mayor**  
The mayor of the East

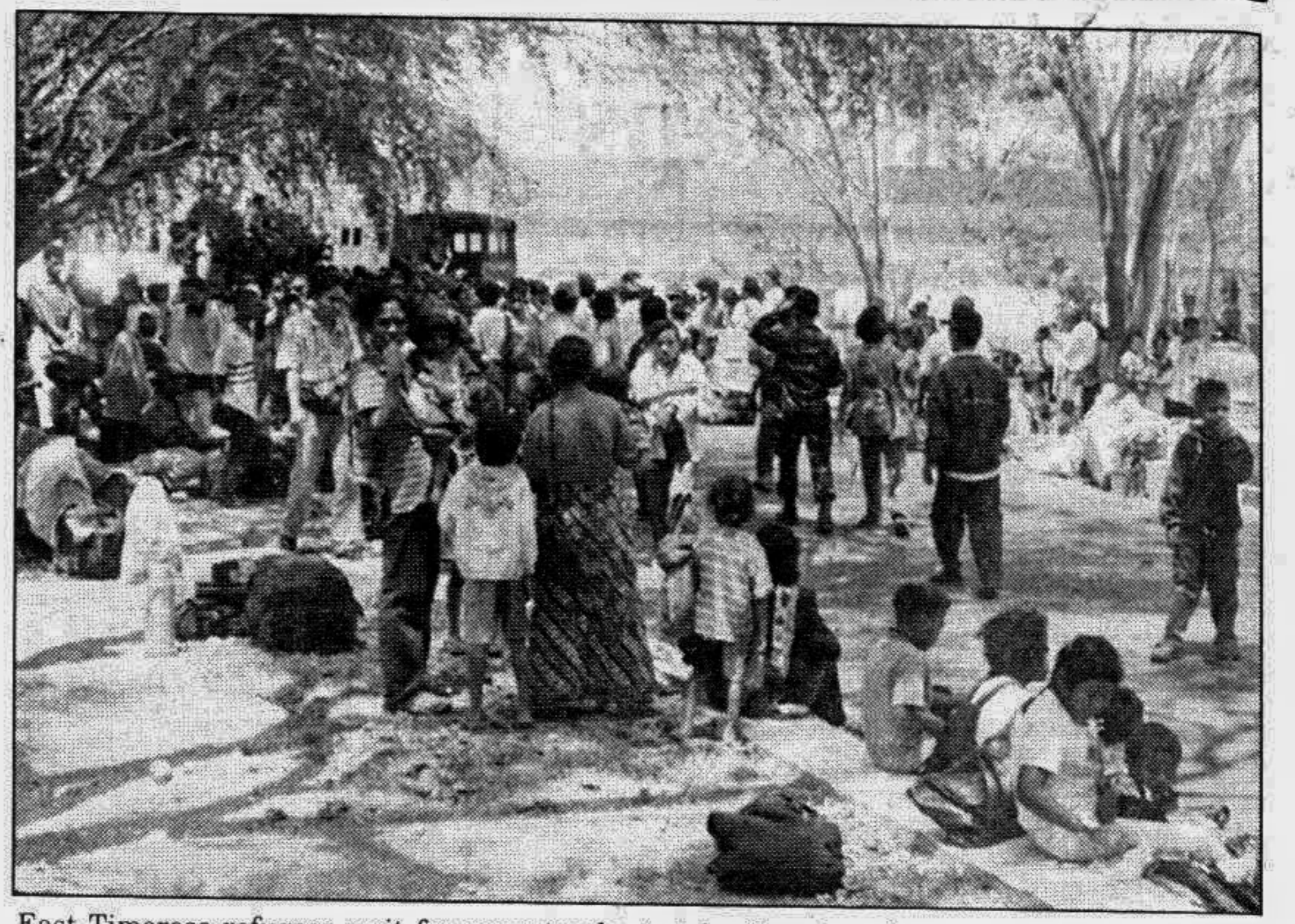
Timorese capital Dili warned Wednesday that the UN Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) had to leave the territory or the killing and destruction there would continue.

"If they don't go, it would be better if we just destroy everything, because they have destroyed everything of ours," said Mateus Haia during an impromptu press conference in a hotel lobby in this West Timorese capital.

"We are one island with the West Timorese. Why on earth should we be separated? We are going to continue our armed struggle for as long as it takes.

"If foreign troops come in, we will resist and shoot them. We have 25,000 weapons. The UN are the new colonialists. First we had the Portuguese, now we have the UN," he said.

Haia, who like other officials in East Timor was approved by the Indonesian government, echoed pro-Jakarta groups which have accused UNAMET of rigging the territory's self-determination vote.



East Timorese refugees wait for army trucks to take them to refugee camps Wednesday at Kupang Airport after being evacuated by army planes from the strife-torn territory. Thousands of refugees have been fleeing East Timor following pro-Indonesian militia attacks in the aftermath of the results of a self-determination referendum. — AFP photo

## Rescue work continues as Athens quake toll hits 49

MENIDI, Greece, Sept 8 - Rescue teams were working through the night in the search for survivors of a strong earthquake which struck northern Athens Tuesday leaving at least 49 people, including children and elderly, dead.

"We have great hope, because there are plenty of gaps in the piles of rubble and those still alive should have a sufficient air supply," a fire brigade officer in Menidi, north west of Athens, where the most of the casualties occurred, told AFP.

The new toll, given by the Greek health and public order ministries, said 61 people were missing and a total 117 survivors had been pulled from the rubble and buildings that collapsed in the quake Tuesday.

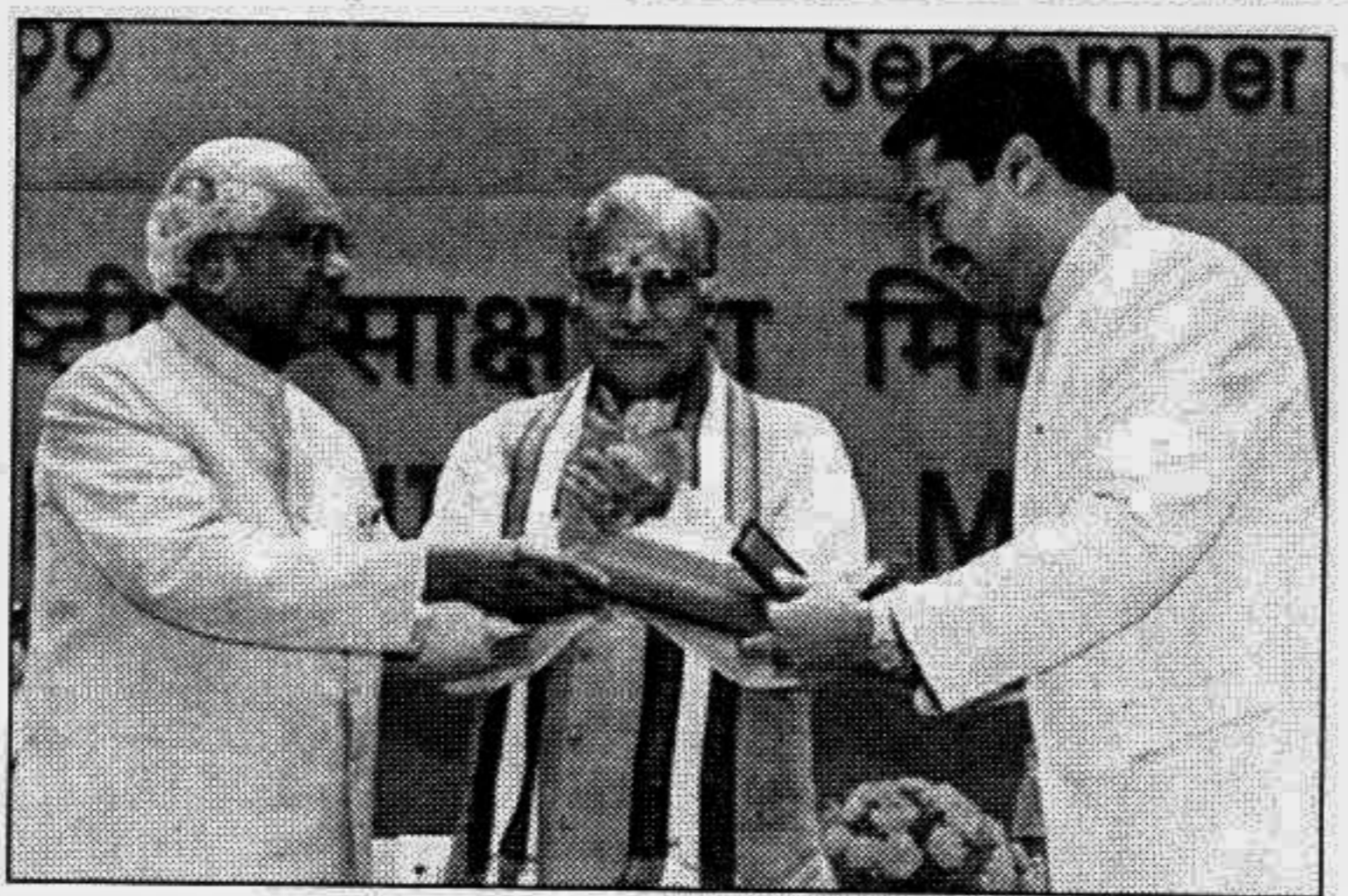
Earlier Greek television

showed scenes of panic as people rushed out of buildings and fled the beaches when the tremors began, at 2:56 p.m. (11:56 GMT).

Rescue workers said that over 40 people were believed to be still trapped in the rubble of dozens of buildings that collapsed.

In a tragic irony, a quake aid concert scheduled here Tuesday -- for victims of the massive Turkish earthquake which killed more than 15,000 people -- had to be cancelled as Greeks rallied to aid their own quake victims.

In Ankara, President Suleyman Demirel of Turkey offered his country's condolences in a message to his Greek counterpart Constantinos Stephanopoulos.



Indian President K.R. Narayanan (L) presents UNESCO's Noma Literacy Prize to the Director General of the National Literacy Mission Bhaskar Chatterjee (R) during a function to celebrate International Literacy Day Wednesday. Nearly fifty per cent of India's one billion people are illiterate. At center is Minister of Human Resource Development Manohar Joshi. —AFP photo

## Indian FM begins Nepal visit

KATHMANDU, Sept 8 - Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh arrived here Wednesday for a four-day official visit, reports AFP.

Singh is scheduled to hold discussions with Nepalese Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, Home Minister Purna Bahadur Khadga, Commerce Minister Ram Krishna Tamrakar and Foreign Minister Ram Sharan Mahata, as well as meet King Birendra.

He is also due to meet Minister for Water Resources Govinda Raj Joshi, president of the ruling Nepali Congress G.P. Koirala, and the leader of the opposition Nepal Communist Party-United Marxist and Leninist, Madhav Kumar Nepal.

Nepalese Foreign Ministry sources said issues to be discussed would likely include the border between the countries, and bilateral cooperation for development of trade.

## Strikes to continue until Sharif goes: Benazir

ISLAMABAD, Sept 8 - Former Pakistani premier Benazir Bhutto said today a massive anti-government protest campaign would not stop until Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif resigns, reports Reuters.

"Pakistan is sliding towards anarchy and that's Mr Nawaz Sharif's responsibility," Benazir told the BBC World Service, a day after opposition parties formed a huge alliance to force Sharif's resignation.

The alliance called for a general strike in the volatile southern province of Sindh for Saturday to protest at alleged custodial killings of political workers by police and said it would hold a public rally in the provincial capital Karachi the same day.

Sharif's government have been held in a little more than one week.

"The strikes are going to continue until Nawaz Sharif resigns," she said.

The alliance, announced after meetings of opposition politicians in Sharif's central home town of Lahore, brings together Benazir's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) with some of its staunch former opponents and one-time Sharif allies, including the strong Karachi-based ethnic Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM).

The alliance of 19 political parties and groups includes the PPP-led 15-party Pakistan Awami Ittehad, the MQM, the Awami National Party (ANP) based in the North West Frontier Province and Tehrik-e-In-

saf, party of cricket hero Imran Khan.

The former premier denied allegations that the alliance of one-time rivals was more a product of political opportunism than shared ideals.

"The situation is so grave in Pakistan today that those whom you call sworn enemies are actually getting together," she said.

Speaking from the United States, she also refuted suggestions that the country's powerful military might use the current upheavals to step in and take power.

"We wouldn't like the army to step in and I'm hopeful that the army itself would not like to take on the responsibility of running Pakistan," she said.

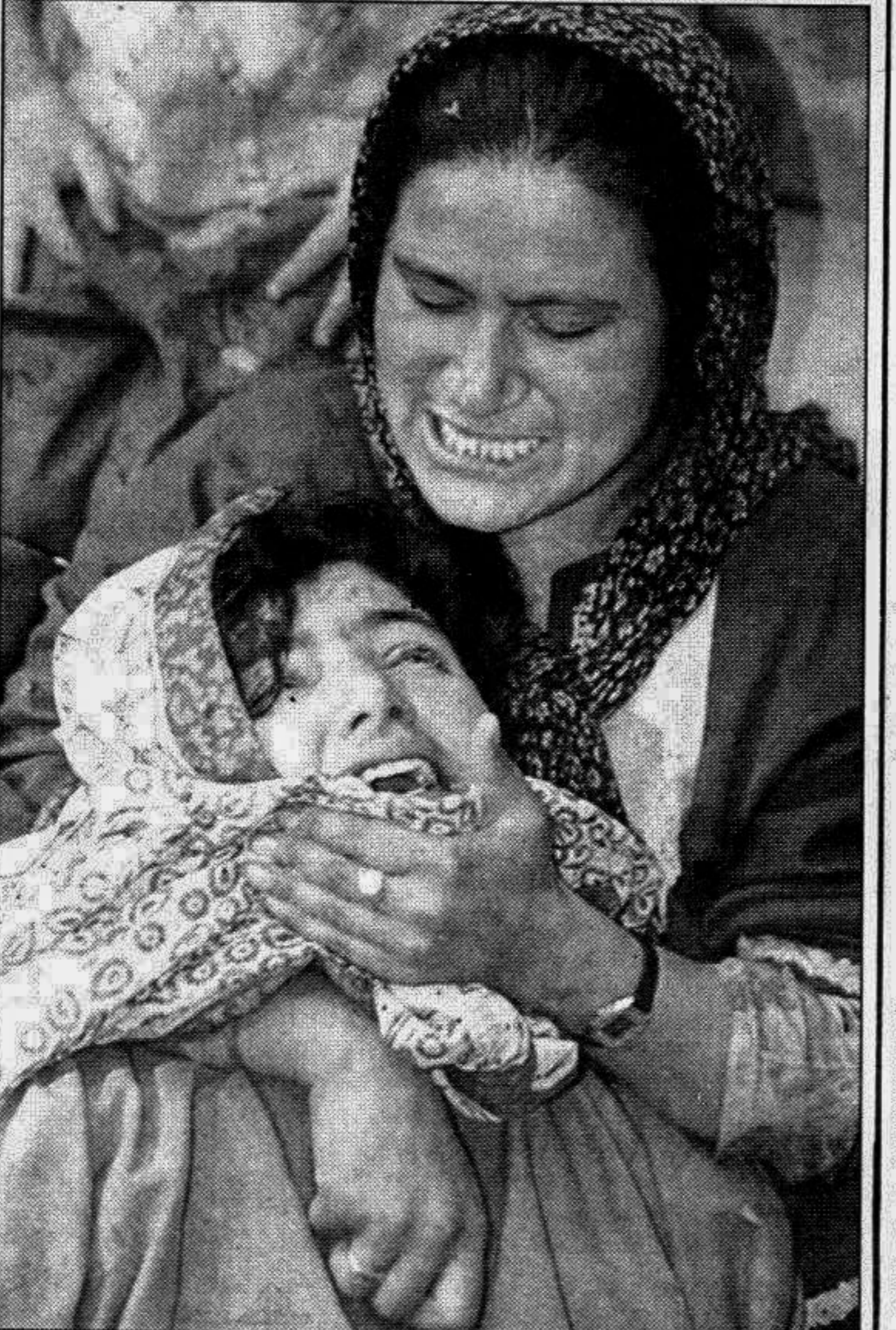
## BRIEFLY

**CIA to increase its global spy force:** Stung by its failure in predicting Indian nuclear tests in May 1998 the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has approved plans to increase its global spy force by 30 per cent over the next seven years, the Washington Post reported Tuesday quoting top agency officials, PFI reports from Washington.

**Kidnapping ring broken in Argentina:** Argentine police said Tuesday they have broken up a ring that was kidnapping babies and selling them, mostly to Germans, AFP reports from Buenos Aires.

**British woman held in Myanmar:** The British Foreign Office confirmed Tuesday that a British woman had been arrested by military police in Myanmar, AFP reports from London.

**2 Afghans killed on Tajik border:** Russian border guard fired on a group of Afghan drug smugglers yesterday, killing two on the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan, the border guard command said, AFP reports from Dushanbe. The incident took place 200 km southwest of the Tajik capital Dushanbe. Three of the drug traffickers fled, escaping into the mountainous region.



Relatives of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate Hyder Noorani mourn his death in southern Kashmir Wednesday. Noorani and his security officer and driver were killed when their vehicle hit a landmine while coming back from an election campaign meeting. —AFP photo

## Israeli Cabinet approves WB pullout

JERUSALEM, Sept 8 - The Israeli cabinet gave its approval Wednesday to the first of three West Bank troop withdrawals under the new peace accord with the Palestinians, the office of Prime Minister Ehud Barak said, reports AFP.

The withdrawal was approved by 17 ministers with only one, the pro-settler Housing Minister Yitzhak Levy, voting against and one abstention. Four other ministers did not attend the cabinet meeting.

"We are giving away land that is dear to us... and for which we have fought," Barak said before the vote.

"But we are a responsible government and are due to move forward to a permanent settlement and peace accords across the whole region to assure Israel's security and its future," he said.

"This is why we have to take difficult decisions," he added. Under the first pullout ex-

pected within a week -- the cabinet did not specify a date -- Israel is to hand over seven per cent of the West Bank to Palestinian administration although Israel will retain security control over the area.

The Palestinians will then control in whole or in part 36 per cent of the West Bank.

The so-called Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum signed in Egypt on Sunday, provides for Israel to withdraw gradually from 11 per cent of the West Bank, giving the Palestinians a total of 40 per cent.

The Israeli press reported that the territory expected to be transferred in the first stage comprises pockets of land around Hebron, to the north of Ramallah, to the south and west of Nablus and to the south of Jenin.

Maps detailing the areas are to be submitted to Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority on Wednesday, Barak's office

## Ultra-orthodox party threatens to quit

MEANWHILE, the powerful ultra-Orthodox party Shas, which has 17 members of parliament, on Tuesday threatened to quit the Israeli government of Ehud Barak in a row over school funding, public television reported.

The four Shas ministers in the government boycotted a meeting of the Cabinet that was voting on next year's budget.

Shas is demanding that the education ministry transfer 25 million shekels (six million dollars) to the independent schools system that it controls.

Education minister Yossi Sarid refused to do so, explaining that "such an operation is not legal in that the management of the Shas schools does not comply with the norms in place."

## Yeltsin linked to Swiss bribe scam: report

WASHINGTON, Sept 8 - Swiss investigators have linked President Boris Yeltsin and other high-ranking Russian officials to 10 million to 15 million dollars in kickbacks paid by a Swiss firm, The Washington Post reported Wednesday, reports AFP.

It was the first time the size of the alleged payoffs to Russia's first family was disclosed in the so-called Kremlingate scandal in which a Swiss firm allegedly paid bribes in exchange for lucrative contracts to refurbish the Kremlin.

The Swiss construction company Mabetex paid tens of thousands of dollars in bills on credit cards in the names of Yeltsin and his two daughters, according to unidentified law enforcement officials quoted by the daily in Geneva.

Mabetex also made between 10 million and 15 million dollars in payoffs to high-ranking Russian officials, including Yeltsin, and their families, one official familiar with the inquiry said.

On Friday, the head of Mabetex, Bexhet Pacolli, a

Kosovar Albanian businessman whose firm won a lucrative contract to renovate the Kremlin and other Russian monuments, denied that he had paid bribes to Russian officials.

Pacolli said the Russian prosecutor's office had merely misinterpreted payments he made to suppliers, believing them to be money to corrupt senior Kremlin officials.

Investigators discovered the credit cards issued by Yeltsin and his two daughters while looking for payments from Mabetex to Pavel Borodin, the Russian official who managed the Swiss firm's contracts with the Kremlin, the daily said.

Mabetex records show that it made regular credit card payments over two to three years to a Swiss bank. It was not clear what purchases were made with the credit cards, officials told the Post.

In a separate probe, US and British investigators are looking into whether up to 15 billion dollars funnelled through US bank accounts may have been laundered by Russia's political and business elite.

## Mir space station goes into hibernation

MOSCOW, Sept 8 - Russia's vacant Mir space station went into hibernation early today after Mission Control shut down its main computer, a space official said, reports Reuters.

"There is nothing extraordinary about the shut down this morning. It was pre-planned," a duty officer at the Mission Control near Moscow said by telephone.

The last three-man crew left Mir in August after the government cut federal financing for the station well beyond its planned lifespan.

Space officials, who insist Mir has not yet exhausted its capabilities, have said the station will stay in orbit un-manned until early next year while they try to find private investors to fund a new manned flight.

"The unmanned station only needs a fraction of the power it needed to run life-support systems when there were people on board. Now there is no need for the computer to manage its energy generating solar panels, so it was shut down," the officer said.

## Party rival challenges Obuchi

TOKYO, Sept 8 - Japan needs a 90-billion-dollar stimulus budget and stronger defence policies, a senior lawmaker warned Wednesday in his challenge to Premier Keizo Obuchi for party leadership, reports AFP.

Taku Yamasaki is scheduled to announce his candidacy for the Liberal Democratic Party's presidential elections on Thursday together with Obuchi and Koichi Kato, another senior figure of the ruling party.

In the next supplementary budget, we need 10 trillion yen (90 billion dollars) in pump-priming measures at the end use level," Yamasaki told the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan.

## Advani asks Sonia not to contest from Amethi

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Sept 8 - Senior BJP leader and union Home Minister, LK Advani on Monday challenged Congress President Sonia Gandhi not to file nomination from Amethi, if she was so confident of winning from Bellary, reports PFI.

"If she is so confident, why should she fight from Amethi", Advani asked at a meet the press programme here.

If she did not file from Amethi it would be giving confidence to the country and her party, "nothing can be better," he said.

Asked if it was intelligence reports the basis of his assessment that Sonia would lose from Bellary, Advani quipped, "It was an intelligent report".

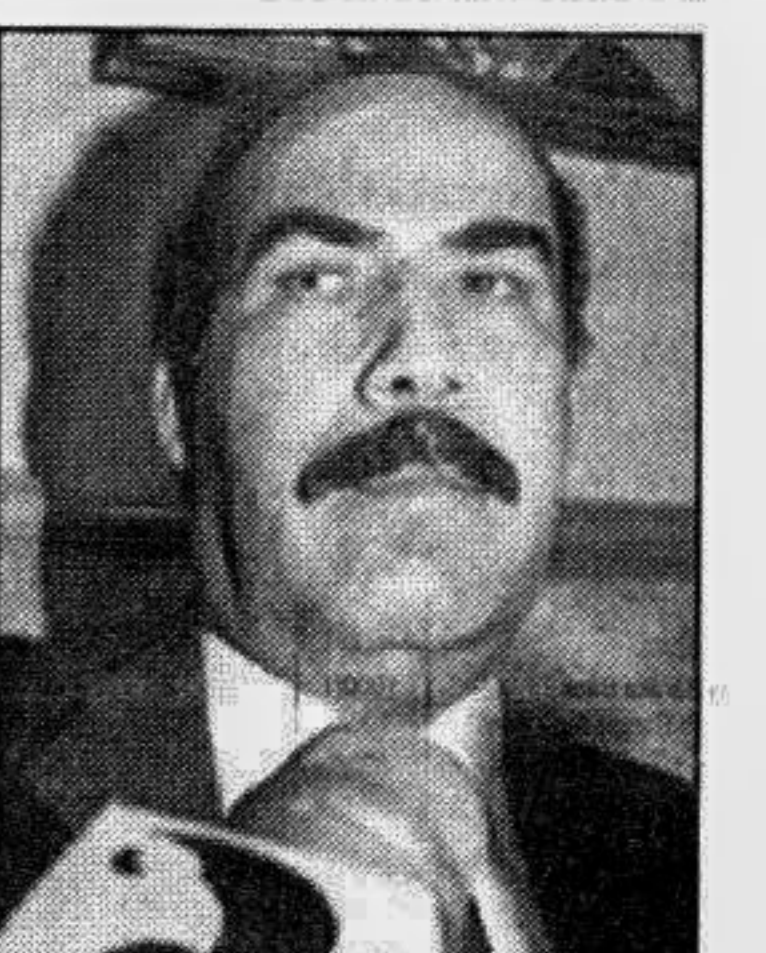
Another report adds: Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee (BJP), former prime minister Chandra Shekhar (SJP) and

Capt. Satish Sharma (Congress) were prominent among the 27 candidates who filed their nominations in the third and final phase of polling in three Lok Sabha seats slated for October 3 in Uttar Pradesh.

Former Union Minister Arif Mohammed Khan (BJP-Bahraich) and Congress leader Nirmal Khattri (Faizabad) also filed their nominations, an election office spokesman said.

Prime Minister Vajpayee fielded his nomination from Lucknow seat and former premier Chandra Shekhar from his traditional Ballia seat. Satish Sharma filed his nomination as Congress nominee from Rae Bareilly.

The last date of filing nominations is September 14, scrutiny is on the next day and last date of withdrawal is September 17 for the third phase of polling in the state.



Barzan Takriti  
**Half-brother of Saddam defects to UAE**

NICOSIA, Sept 8 - Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's half-brother Barzan Takriti has defected to the United Arab Emirates, a newspaper reported Wednesday, says AFP.

He flew aboard a "special plane" from Baghdad against Saddam's wishes, the London-based Arabic daily al-Hayat said.

The newspaper, quoting "informed sources", said Barzan Takriti was left after Saddam's powerful sons Uday and Qusayy had made his life impossible.

Takriti freed himself from pressures inside Iraq which rendered impossible his cohabitation with Uday and Qusayy, the sons of his brother," Al-Hayat said.

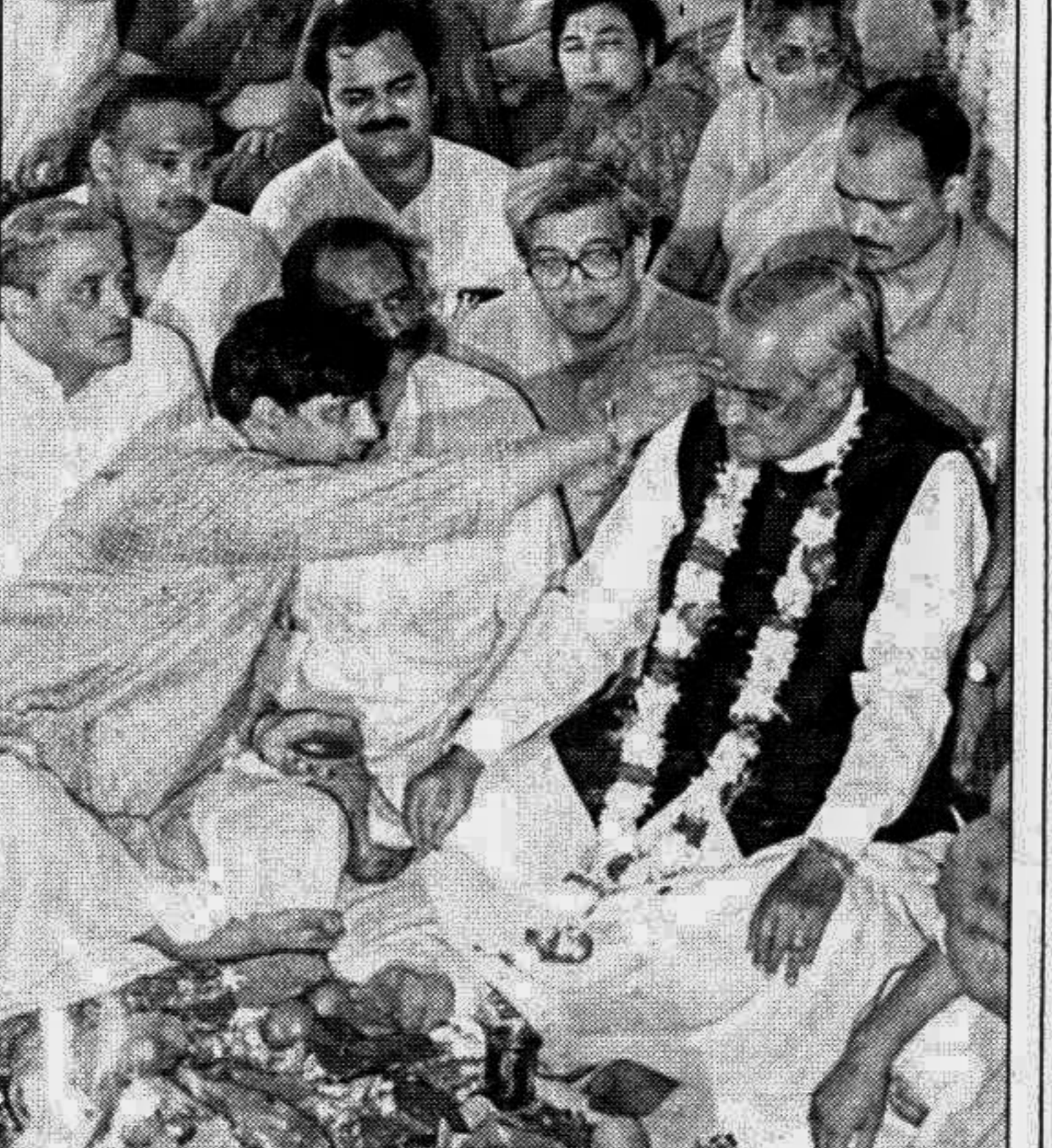
Saddam had in vain sought to reconcile his family, it added.

## 6 N Koreans defect to South

SEOUL, Sept 8 - Six North Korean defectors flew into the South Korean capital on Wednesday, the Seoul government said, reports AFP.

Seoul's spy agency, the National Intelligence Service (NIS), said two North Korean women had arrived here late Wednesday to join four other citizens of the starving communist state who flew in earlier in the day.

The NIS identified the two female North Korean defectors as Kim Ok-Sun, 43, from Hwanghae province, and Kim Min-Suk, 27, from Hamkyong province.



Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee (R) performs "pooja," an auspicious Hindu rite, before filing his nomination papers Tuesday in Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh state. — AFP photo

## India's poor take little comfort from polls

BELLARY, India, Sept 8 - "I am poor and think I will remain poor the rest of my life," says Govsiddappa, a labourer in a small village in southern India, reports AFP.

Caught in a trap of debt and diminishing returns, Govsiddappa and tens of millions like him have little faith in a political system that has largely failed to tackle the grassroots problems of chronic poverty in rural India.

Ironically, Govsiddappa and other voters in the southern backwater of Bellary have just spent several weeks in the political spotlight, as opposition leader Sonia Gandhi and her Hindu nationalist rival waged a high-profile electoral battle over the constituency. Voting was held on Sunday,

but people in this backward rural area have heard too many broken promises from politicians to believe that the election result will bring any substantive benefits.

Govsiddappa, 48, earns less than 1,500 rupees (30 dollars) a month "if the monsoons are good" -- which they have not been for the past 10 years.

Forced to borrow from local loan sharks, his prospects get bleaker by the month.

"I cannot pay my principle or my interest as the crop has been bad. I don't know how I will get out this trap."

Five decades of democracy has brought about little change to the suffering of India's poor. More than 130 million Indians -- twice the population of France -- have no access to

basic health facilities, while 230 million lack safe drinking water.

One third of the close to one billion people earns less than a dollar a day.

The villages of Bellary provide a classic example of the deprivation that is replicated across the country.

Around 75 per cent of the constituency's mainly lower-caste population make their living from agriculture, and 47 per cent are illiterate.

According to the state government, 44.5 per cent of the people in Bellary live below the poverty line, with an average per capita income of 8,544 (200 dollars) a year.

Kesamma, a tea-shop owner, says she walks 10 km every day to fetch drinking water.