

Pak military ruler inducts new provincial governors

ISLAMABAD, Oct. 22: Pakistan's military ruler Pervez Musharraf has appointed three military figures and a former judge as governors of the country's four provinces, reports AFP.

They were to be sworn in later today, officials said. Former lieutenant general Muhammad Sadiq leads the administration in the political heartland of Punjab, retired Air Marshal Muhammad Azim Daudpota in southern Sindh and former lieutenant general Muhammad Shafiq in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP).

Amirul Mulk Mengal, former provincial high court judge, is the only civilian who becomes governor in south-western Balochistan province. The nominations were made late Thursday by the army chief who assumed power after ousting prime minister Nawaz Sharif on October 12.

Previous governors under

Sharif had ceased to function after Musharraf clamped a state of emergency across the country, suspended the constitution, federal parliament and legislatures in all the four provinces.

The general also named former chief of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency, retired lieutenant general Naseem Rana, as defence secretary, officials said.

Rana, the head of the defence ministry replaces Sharif's confidant, retired general Ifkhar Ali Khan.

The general has yet to announce the make-up of the central administration.

An announcement is expected in the next few days but officials say it is likely to be a three-tier system with a seven-member National Security Council (NSC) led by Musharraf at its apex.

The NSC will include chiefs of navy and air force and four specialists in legal, finance, foreign and national affairs. A

think-tank to work as an advisory panel under the NSC will be part of the system.

A cabinet of ministers will also work under the NSC.

Military spokesman Brigadier Rashid Qureshi said the announcement on how Pakistan will be ruled had been held up because Musharraf was still looking for the most suitable people.

Musharraf wants to choose "such people who should shoulder the responsibility with all their wisdom," Qureshi said.

Sources said the provincial governors would carry out the policies laid down by the central authorities.

Musharraf, who wants strict austerity measures to slash expenditures, has said the governors would work with smaller cabinets than previously.

Sadiq who has been appointed Punjab governor is a former commandant of the National Defence College. He has also served as vice-chancellor

of the prestigious Punjab University.

Daudpota, who takes over as governor of the troubled Sindh province, has served as managing director of the national carrier, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA).

NWFP governor Shafiq is a former corps commander of the army.

Justice Mengal is a jurist from the less developed Baluchistan province.

Musharraf, chairing a high-level meeting at the army's general headquarters in the nearby city of Rawalpindi, Thursday, reiterated his "resolve" to put the country's battered economy back on track.

"Strict measures will be taken against loan defaulters, tax evaders, and all others responsible for the prevailing economic crisis," he told the meeting, which was attended by economists, financial experts and senior civil and military officers.

Gusmao returns in triumph

DILI, Oct. 22: Independence leader Xanana Gusmao triumphantly returned to East Timor today, making his first appearance as a free man in his homeland since being arrested by Indonesian authorities seven years ago, reports AFP.

Dressed in Falintil battle fatigues, Gusmao told a cheering, weeping crowd from a balcony on the old governor's residence that East Timor no longer needed Indonesia.

"We don't need Indonesia. East Timorese are very brave people," he said to volleys of "Viva East Timor. Viva Falintil" from the elderly, the sick and the young who survived a month of terror by pro-Jakarta militia after the territory voted overwhelmingly for independence in an August 30 ballot.

In an emotional speech, Gusmao said East Timor would recover and rebuild.

"We hold the right to independence," said the man tipped to be the first president of an independent East Timor. "They won't destroy us. There will be sorrow but today we are more confident because tomorrow is

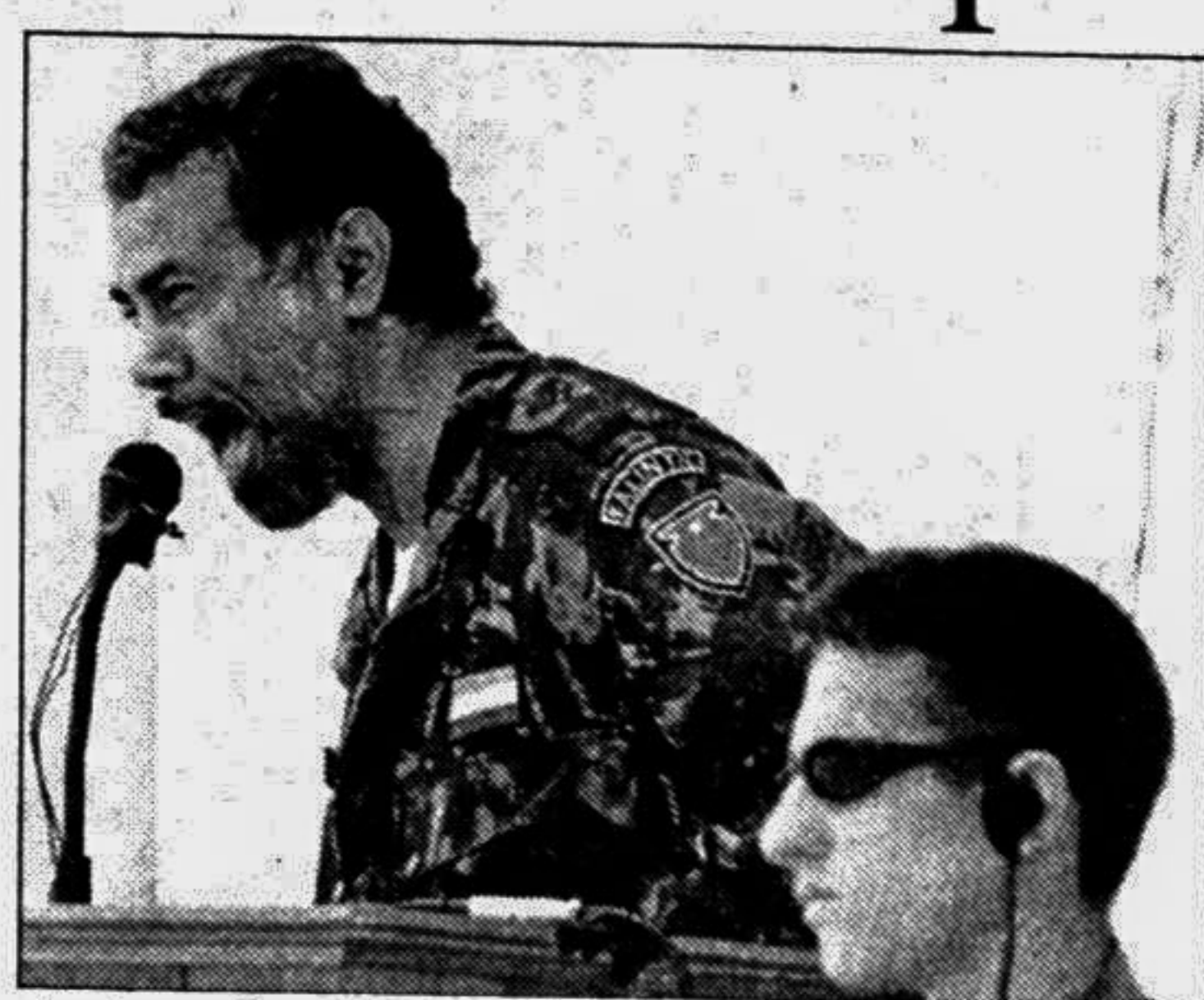
ours. We East Timorese people have fought for 25 years. Today we finally find our liberation." The 53-year-old Gusmao, expected to return this weekend, was slipped into East Timor Thursday night by the UN-mandated forces (Interfet).

Crowds flocked from all corners of Dili to the white-washed governor's residence, standing like a beacon in a sea of charred shells of buildings, to hear him.

"Our homeland is ours. We will develop our new country. We know what we want and we will recover from the damage," Gusmao told them.

"We meet again in very sorrowful circumstance but from today nothing can stop us. Mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, be happy."

Interfet commander Major General Peter Cosgrove said Gusmao, who had been in Darwin chairing a series of meetings with resistance leaders, was flown from Darwin to East Timor's second city of Baucau Thursday night and then flown by helicopter to Dili.



An Australian soldier (R) stands guard as an emotional Commander of Falintil, Xanana Gusmao (L) speaks to more than three thousand East Timorese upon his return to Dili yesterday. Xanana Gusmao who was held in a Jakarta jail for 8 years returned to the capital under high security and was given an emotionally warm homecoming welcome by the crowd. — AFP photo

Fugitive Papon arrested in Switzerland

GENEVA, Oct. 22: Fugitive French war-time criminal Maurice Papon has been arrested in the region of Berne, Swiss police said today, reports AFP.

On Thursday, French authorities issued an international arrest warrant against Papon, who was sentenced to 10 years in prison last year for his role in the deportation of French Jews.

Papon, 89, went into hiding a day before an appeal hearing Thursday against his conviction. In his absence, the appeal was quashed.

He was spotted in a Swiss hotel last week, but had not been seen since he checked out last Friday.

French MPs applaud news of arrest

A round of applause went up in the French National Assembly, or lower house, on Friday on news that fugitive French war-time criminal Maurice Papon had been arrested in Switzerland.

Applause erupted across party lines as Junior Budget Minister Christian Sautter said: "I would like to announce some good news. Mr Papon has been arrested in Switzerland."

Violence claims 5 in Kashmir

JAMMU, India, Oct. 22: Five people including four militants have been killed in separate incidents in the restive north Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, police said today, reports Reuters.

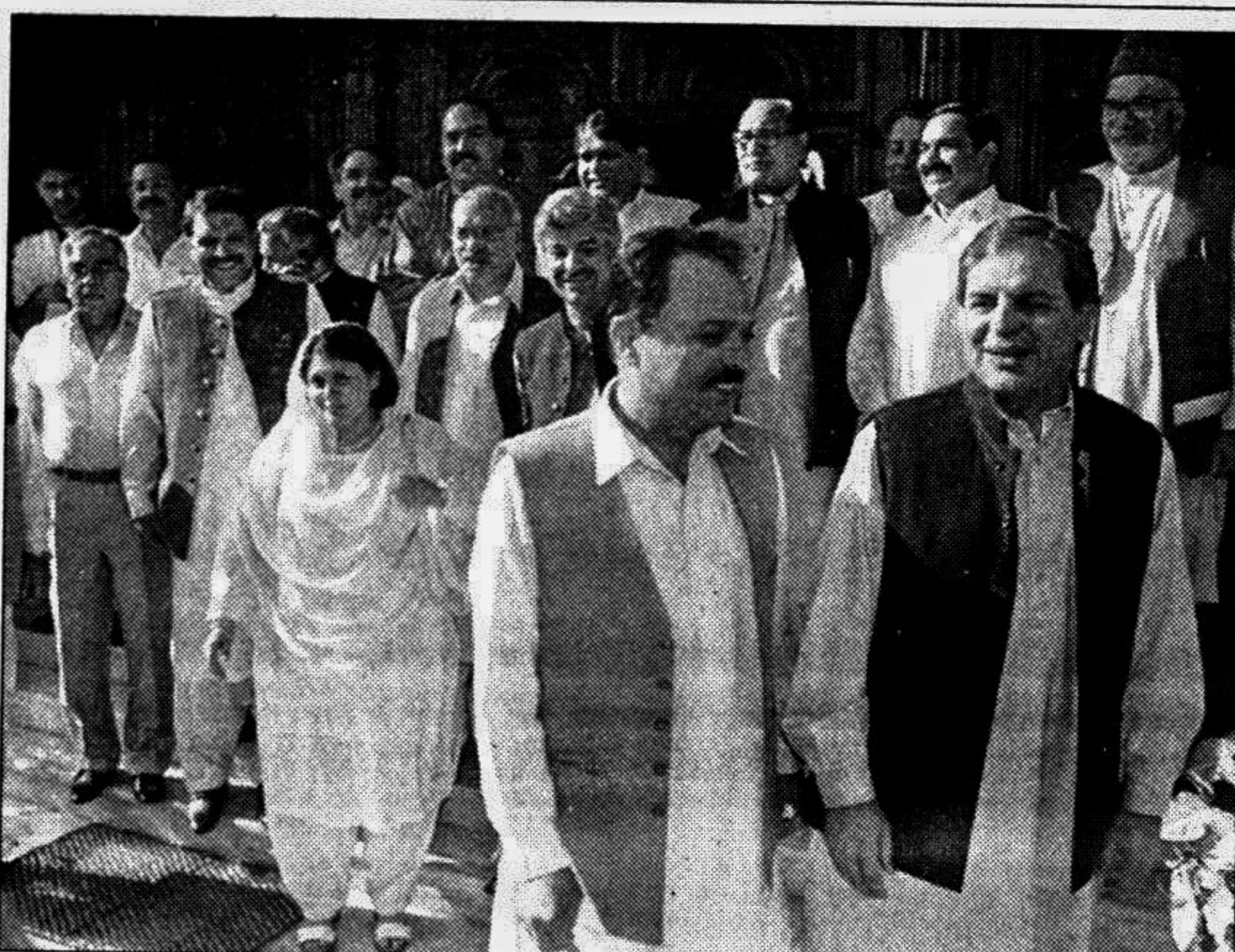
They said border guards killed two militants as they tried to cross the Line of Control with Pakistan into the state's Sumbatani area in Rajouri district, 176-km (110 miles) north of Jammu, the winter capital of the province.

Police said one militant was killed and three injured in another incident when separatists attacked a security post near Surankote area of Poonch district, 256-km (110 miles) north of Jammu.

Indian troops killed two militants in a clash at Bachanwalli in Poonch on Thursday. Separatist violence involving Kashmiri guerrillas has been on the rise since Indian forces ousted infiltrators from northern Kashmir in July after a nearly two-month military operation.

About a dozen militant groups are fighting for Kashmir's independence or merger with neighbouring Pakistan.

Police and hospital say more than 25,000 people have been killed in almost a decade of rebellion in the Himalayan region.



The party members of deposed Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif comes out from the residence of the former interior minister Shujaat Hussain after a meeting in Islamabad Thursday. The party holds its first meeting since the October 12 military takeover, demanded the immediate release of their leader Sharif and "restoration of democracy." They termed last week's military coup "unjustified" but said it would not seek any confrontation with the new government. — AFP photo

Indonesia's new president meets economic experts

JAKARTA, Oct. 22: Indonesia's new president Abdurrahman Wahid today called prominent economists and financial experts to the state palace in his first moves to form a Cabinet and pick advisors, reports AFP.

Palace sources said that among those meeting with Wahid were National Mandate Party (PAN) secretary general Faisal Basri, who is also a University of Indonesia economist, Bank Indonesia deputy governor Dono Iskandar and University of Indonesia economist Sri Mulyani.

The meetings underlined the seriousness of the financial situation in Indonesia, whose bailout loans have been suspended over a bank scandal.

Subianto Cakrawardaya, a minister under former president Suharto, said the president wanted a full briefing on the economic situation.

"As the new president, he wants to gather as much input as possible about economic issues that need to be immediately solved."

He wants to know the current economic condition and

what steps to be taken since the economic issues are very urgent ... we gave him a lot of inputs."

"There are a lot of options ... one of them is to form a national economic council and hopefully (the forming of the council) would be completed by tomorrow (Saturday)," he told journalists.

The economic meetings were followed immediately by meetings with the ambassadors of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Wahid was scheduled to meet Japan's ambassador later in the day.

Newspapers came out with their own cabinet wish lists, but spokesmen for key ministries said that all they were.

A foreign ministry official, who asked not to be named, told AFP that the names of two senior officials from the ministry, Nana Sutresna and Nugroho Wisnumurti, had been circulating as possible successors to veteran Foreign Minister Ali Alatas.

Armed forces spokesman, Major General Sudrajat (Eds: One name), told AFP that it was "too early to speculate" whether

armed forces chief General Wiranto would be named as the coordinating minister for political and security affairs in the new cabinet, as predicted by the Repulika newspaper.

Alwi Shihab, a senior official with Wahid's powerbase the National Awakening Party (PKB), said the make up of the new cabinet would definitely include "representatives from major parties."

Wahid to attend ASEAN summit in Manila

New Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid met with ambassadors from other Southeast Asian nations Friday and informed them of his intention to attend the annual regional summit in Manila next month.

The Malaysian ambassador to Indonesia, Rastam Mohamed Isa, told journalists that Wahid also called for greater cooperation among the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Phalke award for B R Chopra

NEW DELHI, Oct. 22: Noted film-maker and producer of popular TV serial Mohabbharata, B R Chopra, was on Thursday chosen for the prestigious Dada Saheb Phalke Award for 1998, reports PTI.

Balayogi re-elected Speaker

New Delhi, Oct. 22: G.M.C. Balayogi was unanimously re-elected as speaker of the lower house of the Indian parliament today following recent general elections, reports AFP.

Balayogi, 48, was escorted to the Speaker's chair by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and opposition leader Sonia Gandhi amid thumping of desks in the 545-member parliament.

Balayogi has gained the reputation of controlling noisy scenes in parliament with a mix of humour and firmness.

"I will call upon the treasury benches and opposition to help me to run the house in an environment of mutual cooperation and consensus among the members, particularly as there are as many as 38 political parties which have their presence in the house, apart from independents," he said.

Balayogi, a member of the regional Telugu Desam Party (TDP), had stunned everyone in 1998 by beating popular and tested Congress-backed Speaker P.A. Sangma to the Speaker's post.

Japan to send envoy to India, Pakistan

TOKYO, Oct. 22: Japan said today it would send a senior diplomat to India and Pakistan next week to deepen dialogue with New Delhi's new Cabinet and urge Islamabad to restore a civilian government, reports AFP.

State Foreign Secretary Ichita Yamamoto will also urge the two countries to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) on nuclear weapons, the foreign ministry said in a statement.

Yamamoto is to make a three-day visit to India from Sunday before flying to Islamabad on Tuesday for a two-day visit.

"In Pakistan, he plans to meet General Pervez Musharraf and call on him to sign the CTBT and revive a civilian government 'as soon as possible,'" the ministry said.

"In India, he will promote dialogue and exchanges with the new Indian government and discuss a planned visit by Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh to Japan," it said.

The Malaysian ambassador to Indonesia, Rastam Mohamed Isa, told journalists that Wahid also called for greater cooperation among the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

US court allows Ku Klux Klan to hold rally in NY

NEW YORK, Oct. 22: Two US federal court judges yesterday granted members of the Ku Klux Klan permission to hold a two-hour rally outside a Manhattan courthouse this weekend, reports AFP.

US District Court judges Harold Baer and Alvin Hellerstein also ruled that the Klansmen can wear their traditional masks to cover their faces so that they can express their controversial views without fear of retaliation.

Lawyers for the city said they would appeal the ruling before a federal appeals court on Friday.

The judges also ruled that a rival group, called the Partisan Defense Committee, could also hold a simultaneous counter-demonstration Saturday at another nearby courthouse and march to the Klan rally.

However, they ruled that the group could not use sound amplification for their march, warning them not to "snuff out" the Klansmen's message because they did not agree with it.

The judges ordered police to serve as a buffer so both groups could exercise their First Amendment right to free speech and expression.

The plaintiffs, members of a Klan faction called the Church of the American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan based in Butler, Indiana, sued the city and New York Police Department after police denied them a permit to hold the rally.

Russian missile attack kills 137 in Grozny

GROZNY, Russia, Oct. 22: Russian missiles tore into a crowded street market and a maternity hospital in Grozny in attacks that killed 137 people and wounded 260 others, officials in the Chechen capital told AFP today.

It was the bloodiest incident since the start of Moscow's offensive in Chechnya.

The attack on the separatist capital met with an angry denial from Moscow.

But defence officials conceded that Russian forces had carried out a "special operation" in Grozny Thursday to "destroy arms traffickers" in a central market, although it said it had not used "artillery or aircraft."

The market and the maternity hospital are close to the presidential palace, which was not hit, Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov was not in the place.

The death toll is likely to rise, with many of the wounded in a critical condition, Chechen military officials said.

A missile hit the central Grozny market, only 40 meters (yards) from the presidential palace on the central Grozny Liberty Square, killing 68 people, the Chechen officials said. A second, close to a mosque in the Kalinin district on the outskirts of Grozny, left 41 people dead and 112 others wounded.

A third, which slammed into the city's main maternity hospital, some 25 meters (yards) from the Chechen presidential palace, killed 28 and wounded 95 more.

The others struck against the city's outskirts and an unoccupied building close to the presidential palace.

The five Russian rockets crashed into the city at around 6:15 p.m. (8:15 pm BST), witnesses said.

An AFP correspondent reported that most of the badly mangled and burned bodies at the maternity hospital were those of women and newborn babies.

On Friday at midday, a scene of devastation still reigned in Grozny's central market, where 15 mutilated bodies lay sprawled on the ground. A crowd of locals massed at the scene, in a state of shock.

In the city's main hospital, the corridors, dimly lit by candlelight, were splattered with blood as the wounded lay amid the dead.

One of the injured, Nikolai, saw 20 corpses wheeled out before his eyes.

"They say they are after terrorists. That's us, apparently, the terrorists. They want to kill us all," he said bitterly.

Grozny's medical services, overwhelmed by the aftermath of the tragedy, say they are unable to treat all the casualties, and are suffering from an acute lack of medicine, an AFP correspondent reported.

As details of the attack emerged, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin was in Helsinki for a European Union-Russia summit, where he was expected to face close questioning from EU leaders over Russia's campaign in Chechnya.

Grozny says more than 2,000 civilians have already died since Russian warplanes launched a blitz against the rebel public on September 5 with the declared aim of crushing Islamic "terrorists" blamed for attacks in Russia.

200 hurt as fresh quake rocks Taiwan

TAIPEI, Oct. 22: Some 200 people were injured when a powerful earthquake rocked southern Taiwan today leaving a trail of damaged buildings, fires and cut telephone lines in Chiayi city, reports AFP.

There were no immediate reports of fatalities following the quake which measured 6.4 on the Richter scale and came just a month after the island's worst earthquake in living memory.

Some 200 people had checked into hospitals for treatment of bruises, cuts and other injuries after the tremor, which was followed by between 20 to 30 aftershocks including several major ones.

A rescue center official put the preliminary number of injured people at 126.

A building of the Min Hsiung engineering school in Chiayi toppled injuring seven students, who were in stable conditions after medical treatment, the China Times Express said.

Eight students in another vocational school suffered minor cuts from broken glasses, it added.

Powerful shakes also overturned test tubes in a laboratory in Chung Cheng University sparking a fire. No one was injured in the blaze which was quickly brought under control.

There were also gas leaks in several buildings in Chiayi and telephone lines were cut in the downtown area, a rescue official told AFP.

Local television showed tilted schools and several buildings which had sunk into the ground.

The latest tremors also caused panic selling in the local bourse where share prices dipped 95.27 points, or 1.2 percent, to 7,559.63.

The tremor struck at 10:19 a.m. (8:19 am BST) with its epicenter 2.5 km northwest of the city, the seismology centre said. It originated 12.1 km underground.

The quake was followed by more than 60 aftershocks in the Chiayi area, five of them with magnitudes ranging from 6.0 to 4.1, it said.

The main earthquake was also felt in Hong Kong, several

hundred kilometres away. "The quake was possibly caused by the movement of the Meishan fault line going through Chiayi," said the center's director Kao Kai-wen.

"Very few quakes with magnitudes over 6.0 had hit Chiayi area and this tremor would help release energy accumulated over the past 30 years and alleviate concerns of a even more powerful earthquake," Kao said.

In July of last year, Chiayi was hit by a strong quake measuring 6.2 on the Richter scale, leaving five dead and 26 injured.

Seismologists have warned that Taiwan might be hit by more quakes after a devastating temblor measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale struck central Taiwan on September 21.

More than 13,100 aftershocks have been recorded since the fatal quake, which left at least 2,405 people dead and 11,306 injured. Seventy-nine people are still unaccounted for and the damage to the country is estimated at 9.2 billion US dollars.

BRIEFLY

Desmond Tutu undergoes surgery:

South African Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu underwent exploratory cancer surgery Thursday at the Emory University Hospital in Atlanta in the southern US state of Georgia, AFP reports from Washington.

The surgery "was to see where the cancer spread, and determine what kind of future treatments are necessary," said hospital spokeswoman Michelle Stevenson. The surgery lasted a mere two hours and 15 minutes, she said.

"He's doing great," Stevenson said. "He'll go home tomorrow (Friday) morning."

Colombian hijackers free hostages:

The 13 tourists kidnapped last weekend when their boat was hijacked off Colombia's coast have been freed, a navy officer said Thursday, AFP reports from Bogota.

Colonel Gustavo Rojas said the Colombian tourists were freed because of the "pressure" of soldiers sent searching for them. The tourists, all men, were on a cruise with 20 other people from Buenaventura to the Pacific island of Juanchaco on Saturday when the boat was hijacked.

Women and children were released after 45 minutes, and only 13 men, aged between 28 and 75, were held.

Ecuador volcano spews ashes:

The Tungurahua volcano spewed a giant, eight-km high column of ash and vapour Thursday, alarming the residents of this mountain town and the surrounding area, AFP reports from Ambato.

The eruption was visible from Ambato, 45 km northwest of Tungurahua, according to the Geophysics Institute at the National Polytechnical School. "The situation remains the same," said Teodoro Pena, the government official monitoring the situation here. "We're maintaining the orange alert."

S Korean navy captures 14 N Koreans:

South Korea's navy yesterday captured 20 North Korean boats carrying 14 people in southern waters of the Yellow Sea, military officials said, AFP reports from Seoul.

A North Korean tug-boat and a tiny barge were stopped one mile northeast of the western border island of Paekryong with 13 men and one woman, a spokesman at South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff told AFP.

Anwar names politicians who plotted against him

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct. 22: Sacked Malaysian deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim today named senior politicians whom he said plotted to bring criminal charges against him because he threatened to expose corruption, reports AFP.

Giving evidence for the first time in his sodomy trial, Anwar said the current Finance Minister Daim Zaiduddin conspired with Attorney General Mohd Abdullah to bring him to court.

He told the court of a conversation he said he had with Daim on August 12, 1998, a month before he was sacked.

"Daim told me that I would be charged soon and Tun (honorable) Daim suggested to me that I have to resign to avoid undue embarrassment to me and my family," Anwar said.

He said he told Daim: "I'm shocked that the attorney-general chose to have a deal with you and I do not accept threats."

Mohd, who is leading the prosecution case and is a possible witness in this trial, walked out of the packed courtroom at this point.

Anwar said even though his relations with Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad were "tense" at the time, "I did not expect them to resort to such an action."

Anwar said he immediately confronted Mahathir over Daim's remarks.

"I told the prime minister Daim has no right or responsibility to control or guide the attorney-general," he said.



Sacked Malaysian deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim waves to his supporters at the Federal Court building in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Anwar, giving evidence for the first time in his sodomy trial, said the current Finance Minister Daim Zaiduddin had conspired with Attorney General Mohd Abdullah to bring him to court. — AFP photo

Lankan opposition demands observers to monitor polls

COLOMBO, Oct. 22: Sri Lanka's main opposition today demanded foreign observers to monitor snap presidential elections and vowed to take to the streets if there was a repeat of rigging seen at recent local polls, reports AFP.

The United National Party said they were ready for a Philippines-style street demonstration against President Chandrika Kumaratunga's government if ballot stuffing was allowed as in a key council election in January.

"We will lead the people to the streets and launch a civil disobedience campaign if the government does not hold a free and fair election for the presidency," UNP spokesman Ronnie de Mel said.

He urged the police, armed forces and public servants to remain neutral while conducting the vote.

The UNP on Wednesday put forward former prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe as its candidate against Kumaratunga.

Kumaratunga on Wednesday issued a proclamation declaring her intention to go for an early election before her six-year term expires in November next year and the elections are expected to be held by mid January.

The vote must be conducted across the country but it was not immediately clear how the elections department intends to

hold the ballot in the island's embattled northeastern regions.

Hundreds of thousands of people are displaced and live as refugees within the country while Tamil Tiger rebels control several areas of the island's north as well as the east where the state writ does not run.



Sri Lanka's former finance minister Ronnie de Mel speaks to reporters yesterday to announce the main opposition United National Party's call for international observers to monitor presidential elections due before January. De Mel warned that they will lead people to the streets and launch a civil disobedience campaign if the ruling party tried to rig the election. — AFP photo

Death toll rises to 10 Yemen insists car blast an accident

SANAA, Oct. 22: The casualty toll from a car explosion in southern Yemen rose to 10 dead and 22 injured today as officials insisted the blast was an accident and had nothing to do with recent threats of attacks by Islamic militants.

Ten Yemenis, including five civilians, were killed and 22 injured in the explosion of a car carrying 300 kilograms of TNT, a senior official told AFP asking not to be named.

The two people in the car carrying the explosives were killed instantly and three policemen and five civilian bystanders, two of them children, were also killed," he said.

Pak newsman Najam, his wife Jugnu get Int'l Press Freedom award