

Karachi police on alert after US warning

KARACHI, Apr 1: Pakistani police have adopted strict security measures after a US warning to Americans about a threat to kidnap a US citizen around Karachi, the city's police chief said today.

"We have been conveyed the information from the US embassy and we have taken adequate security measures," Javed Iqbal, told AFP.

"Armed policemen have been deployed outside and in the surroundings of their (American) residences," Iqbal said.

"We have taken other preventive measures as well."

The US State Department said in a statement that the United States embassy in Islamabad "has information regarding a possible kidnapping of an American in or around Karachi between March 31 and April 6."

"Although the information is unconfirmed, it is prudent for all Americans to review their security practices, particularly being aware of their surroundings and varying their travel times and routes," it said.

The warning comes only one week after US President Bill Clinton visited Pakistan as part of his South Asian tour.

Fresh fighting in Lanka: Troops kill 30 LTTE rebels

COLOMBO, Apr 1: Government soldiers killed at least 30 rebels in fresh fighting near a strategic causeway linking the Sri Lankan mainland with the northern Jaffna peninsula, the Defence Ministry said Saturday, reports AP.

A ministry statement said that the guerrillas tried to attack army artillery positions in Iyakachchi, near the Elephant Pass causeway, but were repelled by the soldiers.

A large number of rebels were killed in the confrontation and troops later found the bodies of 21 guerrillas in the area, the statement said.

The ministry also said that air force jets and artillery had pounded a rebel armored vehicle in the Nagar Kovil area, also in the Jaffna peninsula. It said seven rebels were killed in the same area during skirmishes.

Another two guerrillas were shot dead elsewhere in the north.

The guerrillas launched a fresh offensive last weekend to recapture Jaffna which they had lost to the military in 1996. Jaffna is 300 kilometers (185 miles) north of Colombo, the Sri Lankan capital.

If the rebels succeed in overrunning the Elephant Pass, they would cut off the Jaffna peninsula from the rest of the country and recapture Jaffna, their former capital.

India urges settlement of border row with China

NEW DELHI, Apr 1: India today called on China to improve relations and urged a settlement of a border row which dragged the two Asian giants into a bloody war almost four decades ago, reports AFP.

Indian leaders congratulated China on the 50th anniversary of the setting up of diplomatic ties between the two countries and stressed the need for regional peace and economic partnership.

"We attach importance to the development of friendly, cooperative, good-neighbourly and mutually-beneficial relations with China," Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said in a message to his Chinese counterpart Zhu Rongji.

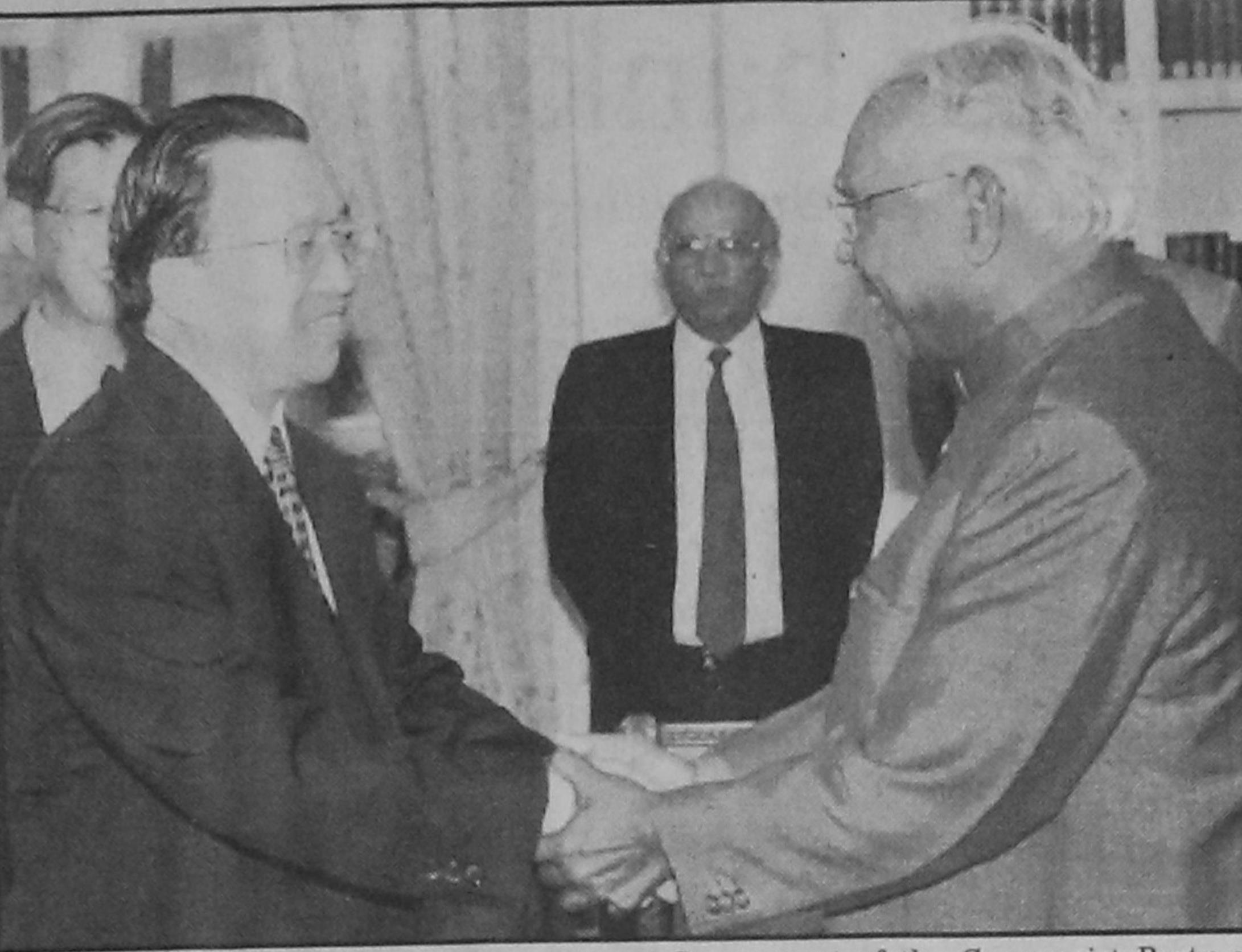
"With the joint efforts of the two sides, we can build a stable relationship of constructive cooperation into the 21st century and thereby contribute to peace and stability in the Asian region," he said.

India was the first country to accord diplomatic recognition to China's Communist government.

Beijing has also been seeking for the past year to improve ties with New Delhi, which were scarred by a brief border war in 1962 and India's nuclear tests in May 1998, which were strongly condemned by Beijing.

In a sign of the improving Sino-Indian relationship, Indian President KR Narayanan is set to visit China in May to attend ceremonies marking the anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties.

Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh in a message to his Chinese counterpart Tang Jiaxuan said it was the responsibility of New Delhi and Beijing to impose a regime of peace



Dai Bingguo (L), Director of the International Department of the Communist Party of China, meets Indian President K.R. Narayanan at presidential palace in New Delhi on Friday. India and China celebrated 50 years of diplomatic relations yesterday. — AFP photo

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territory in Kashmir, while Beijing lays claim to a wide swath of territory in the far-eastern Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh.

Thirteen rounds of talks over the years on the dispute has failed to yield any tangible results on the militarised Sino-Indian borders.

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said Asia's two most populous nations should forge an economic partnership.

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