

### Malaysian state passes law against deviant teachings

KUALA LUMPUR, Apr 9: A remote northern state has become the first in Malaysia to impose a law to curb deviant teachings among Muslims by detaining offenders in rehabilitation centres, newspapers reported on Sunday.

The Perlis state assembly passed the Islamiah Faith Protection Bill 2000 on Saturday, empowering Islamic courts in the state to prosecute Muslims who practice or spread deviant teachings. The Sun and Sunday Star newspapers reported.

Those found guilty will be detained for up to a year at special rehabilitation centres, the national Bernama news agency said.

There is only one such centre in Malaysia, but another will be built soon in Perlis, on the northern border with Thailand.

Perlis chief Minister Shahidan Kassim, quoted by local media, denied that the law was passed to "trap" opposition politicians whom the government has accused of abusing Islam for their own political purposes.

"Let us all support the Bill to protect the purity of Islam," Shahidan was quoted as saying by the Sunday Star.

Government leaders have singled out the opposition Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party, or PAS, for allegedly promising a place in heaven for Muslims in the country who support the party. PAS has denied such claims.

### Malaysia grants school powers to check crimes

KUALA LUMPUR, Apr 9: Malaysian school principals will be given more administrative powers to combat rising gangsterism and criminal activities in schools, reports said today, says AFP.

The Star newspaper quoted Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi as saying that the problem was serious and headmasters need to be given adequate powers to help check crime in schools.

Abdullah said he was concerned at how gangsterism had proliferated to the level that some teachers were afraid to discipline rowdy students for fear of reprisals while some students stayed away from schools for fear of bullies.

"I am worried. We cannot wait for the problem to become big before we say it is serious... it can spread until it becomes difficult to fight," he was quoted as saying by the New Straits Times.

Abdullah did not elaborate on the powers that would be given to school heads but said police and the education ministry were now discussing the matter.

Shukur Abdullah, director-general in the education ministry, said school heads currently had "administrative powers" which allowed them to expel students involved in criminal cases.

But sacking students would not help resolve gangsterism, he said, adding that it would be better to rehabilitate and teach them good morals.

The New Straits Times said a counselling programme, including motivational and religious talks, had been planned by police for some 500 problem students from 39 schools in Kuala Lumpur.

## World powers fail to set deadline to curb global warming

OTSU, Japan, Apr 9: Environment ministers from the Group of Eight powers agreed today to take the initiative to curb global warming, but failed to set a common deadline, reports AFP.

Ministers from the G8 -- Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States -- ended a three-day meeting in the western Japanese city of Otsu, near Kyoto, with no major protest.

"We reaffirm our responsibilities to take the lead in combating climate change," a joint communiqué said.

The ministers agreed to ratify the December 1997 Kyoto protocol "as soon as possible" after the sixth meeting on Climate Change (COP 6) which will take place in The Hague (Netherlands) in November. The protocol was adopted by 159 countries to cut emissions of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide which trap the earth's heat.

But facing opposition from the United States and Canada, the G8 members failed to set a

specific deadline. "We confirm our commitment to ensure that results achieved at COP 6 help promote the ratification and entry of force of the Kyoto protocol as soon as possible," the communiqué said.

"For most countries, this means no later than 2002," it said, stopping short of naming all the G8 members.

While Japan and European nations wanted to impose a deadline of 2002 for countries to ratify the protocol and make it legally binding, the United States and Canada were opposed to setting time constraints.

"Our differences were minor and our goals are common," Michael McCabe, deputy administrator of the US Environment Protection Agency, told a news conference.

The Clinton administration has backed "the ratification as soon as possible," but has faced difficulties in gaining support in Congress, McCabe said.

Jürgen Trittin, German minister for the environment, told the same conference: "The ratification will be a very important step ahead."

Under the protocol, developed countries will have to show that by the target period 2008-2012 they have reduced greenhouse gas output by 5.2 per cent on average from 1990 levels.

The protocol would lose much of its meaning without the United States, which accounts for about a third of the world's greenhouse gas output, experts said.

None of the developed countries has yet ratified the Kyoto Protocol, although France is expected to be the first after getting approval Wednesday from the national assembly.

"Climate change is an unprecedented challenge and critical environmental issue facing humankind," the joint statement said.

"The world has experienced severe and unusual weather consistent with many projections of the future impacts of climate change," it said.

"Temperatures in the 1990s ranked amongst the highest on

record and many parts of the world experienced unusually severe droughts, floods and storms," it said.

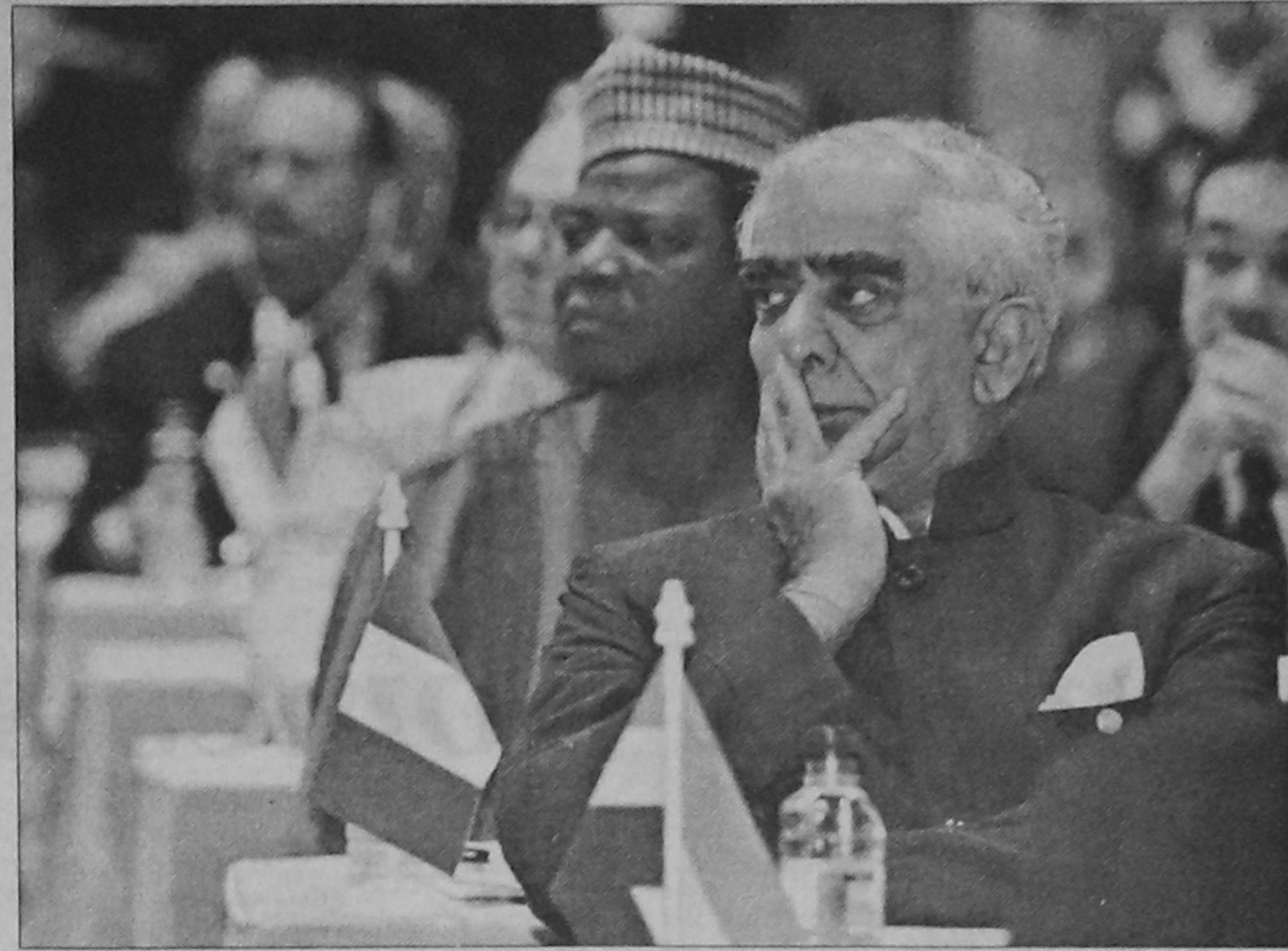
Signatories to the Kyoto Protocol are scheduled to meet in The Hague in November to discuss concrete measures to cut their production of greenhouse gases, blamed for global warming.

Scientists say that even if the protocol is fully implemented, decades will pass before the emission cuts take effect, as there is still so much gas in the atmosphere acting as a blanket that retains solar heat.

They say a gradual warming of the earth is inevitable, leading to a possibly catastrophic rise in sea levels and changes in local climates.

The G8 ministers remained divided over a candidate city to host the planned 2002 Earth Summit, a meeting official said.

Japan insists it should be held in Asia, while Europe backs an African summit. The previous meeting was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.



Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh listens to the opening speech by Colombian President Andres Pastrana during the inauguration of the 12th meeting of foreign ministers of non-aligned nations in Cartagena, Colombia, on Saturday. — AFP photo

## Police warn Anwar supporters to cancel protest rally

KUALA LUMPUR, Apr 9: Police in the Malaysian capital have warned supporters of jailed politician Anwar Ibrahim to abandon plans for a rally to mark the first anniversary of his conviction, Malaysian media reports said Sunday, reports AP.

Hoping to spark a fresh wave of anti-government protests, leaders of the opposition National Justice Party say they will march with tens of thousands of Malaysians to the king's palace on April 15. The party is led by Anwar's wife, Azizah Ismail.

City police chief Kamarudin Ali, quoted by the Sunday Star and New Sunday Times newspapers, said the organisers of the planned protest risked being arrested and charged under the Sedition Act.

"To avoid any untoward incident, we urge the organisers to

call off the gathering and for the people to stay away," Kamarudin told reporters Saturday.

"Those who organise or incite others to participate in such a gathering will face court action," he said.

Authorities last month drew reproach from international and local human rights groups when they issued an indefinite ban on outdoor public rallies in Kuala Lumpur.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad accused the opposition of trying to hatch new dissension.

"They are ready to beat up the police, they want to carry weapons and sticks," Mahathir was quoted as saying by the national Bernama news agency.

Police on Sunday also broke up a crowd of more than 100 people who had gathered on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur to

listen to speeches by Anwar's wife Azizah and other opposition leaders.

The leaders told the crowd they would defy authorities and proceed with this Saturday's rally.

Street demonstrations shook the usually placid Malaysian capital for the first time after Anwar was fired as deputy prime minister in September 1998 and arrested by police.

Anwar was subsequently convicted of abuse of power and sentenced to six years in prison on April 14 last year. He is now on trial on charges of sodomy, a crime in mainly Muslim Malaysia for which the maximum penalty upon conviction is 20 years in jail.

Anwar says he was framed by his political enemies who wanted to prevent him from succeeding Mahathir.



Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze casts his ballot during the presidential elections in Georgia yesterday. Shevardnadze, 72, a former Soviet foreign minister, is expected to win the elections. — AFP photo

## Musharraf to attend G-77 summit

ISLAMABAD, Apr 9: Pakistani military ruler General Pervez Musharraf left for Paris today en route to Havana to attend the Group of 77 summit in the Cuban capital, state television reported, says AFP.

During his brief stopover in the French capital, Musharraf will hold talks with French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine.

This will be his first visit to France since he seized power and overthrew prime minister Nawaz Sharif's government in a military coup in October.

The French foreign ministry said Vedrine would appeal for a swift return to democracy in Pakistan and ask for a "measure of clemency" for Sharif, who was sentenced to life in prison on Thursday.

Musharraf will lead Pakistan's delegation at the two-day summit of the developing countries starting in Havana from Wednesday.

The South Summit would provide an "important opportunity for Pakistan to present its point of view on contemporary economic and political issues both in the regional and global context," the official APP news agency said.

## Bourguiba laid to rest

MONASTIR, Apr 9: Habib Bourguiba, the forward-looking former Tunisian president who brought the country to independence, was buried Saturday in the coastal city of Monastir as thousands crowded around the family mausoleum for a last goodbye, reports AP.

Mourners including France's Jacques Chirac, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika and the Ivory Coast's junta leader Gen. Robert Guei gathered to honour the man who faded from public view after he was toppled in a bloodless coup in 1987.

Bourguiba died in solitude Thursday in Monastir, the city where he was born, 160 kilometers (110 miles) east of the capital. Records put his age at 96, though many people believe he was older.

A military band marched at the front of the funeral procession as it headed toward the imposing marble mausoleum towering over the beach. Thousands of mourners had been waiting at the mausoleum since early morning to see the ceremony.

During three decades of authoritarian rule, Bourguiba put the Muslim North African country on its pro-Western course.

He fought against what he regarded as outdated Islamic traditions and angered fundamentalists by giving equal rights to women and discouraging the holy fast of Ramadan.

## Marine aircraft crashes in US: 19 killed

MARANA, Arizona, Apr 9: A Marine Corps aircraft crashed while landing at an airport west of Tucson and was engulfed in flames, killing 19 people on board, authorities said, reports AP.

The plane went down Saturday night with four crew members and 15 passengers aboard, said Gunnery Sgt. Nathan Portman of the Marine Corps Air Station at Yuma, where the flight originated, about 390 kilometers away.

All the victims were Marines, but officials said they did not know where they had been based. The aircraft was not based at the Yuma air station.

The MV-22 tiltrotor Osprey, which looks like a large turbo-prop plane but can take off like a helicopter, was landing at the Marana Northwest Regional Airport as part of a training

mission when it crashed, said Marine Col. William D. Catto.

The plane was expected to return to the Yuma air station, Catto said.

Firefighters said witnesses reported seeing the plane head "straight downward," said Katy Heiden, spokeswoman for the Northwest Fire District.

"It was fully engulfed and there were small explosions," she said.

Catto said there were no weapons on board the plane.

"This terrible loss of life is a reminder of how many men and women in the nation's military put their lives at risk, each and every day, so that we might be a free people, and the cause of peace can be advanced throughout the world," US President Bill Clinton said in a statement issued by the White House.

Introduced last September.

The Marine Corps Osprey is also known as a convertiplane. Its two propjet turbines power two oversize propellers.

Jointly produced by Bell helicopter Textron of Fort Worth, Texas, and Boeing Co. in Ridley Park, Pennsylvania, the aircraft can achieve speeds over 645 kph and an altitude of 7,500 metres. It is designed to carry up to 24 troops.

Boeing spokeswoman Susan Bradley said late Saturday night that it was not yet clear whether the company would join the investigation.

Military planners see the aircraft as a means of getting more US troops and pilots safely out of danger zones and enhancing drug interdiction, humanitarian and civilian rescue capabilities.

## CIA fires official over Chinese embassy bombing

WASHINGTON, Apr 9: A Central Intelligence Agency employee blamed for incorrectly targeting the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade for American bombing during NATO's air war against Yugoslavia last year has been fired, according to an agency official, reports AP.

"We did sever ties with one agency employee," an intelligence official said Saturday night, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Six others, including one senior official and four managers, received administrative punishments that ranged from oral warnings to letters of reprimand. One official, who expressed concern about the target, was singled out by CIA Director George Tenet for praise, the official said.

CIA spokesman Bill Harlow issued a statement late Saturday confirming personnel action had been taken, but refused to make public details for reasons of security and privacy.

Blame for the "tragic accident," was widespread, Harlow said. "Numerous CIA officers at all levels of responsibility failed to ensure that the intended bombing target... had been properly identified and precisely located before CIA passed a target nomination package to the US military for action."

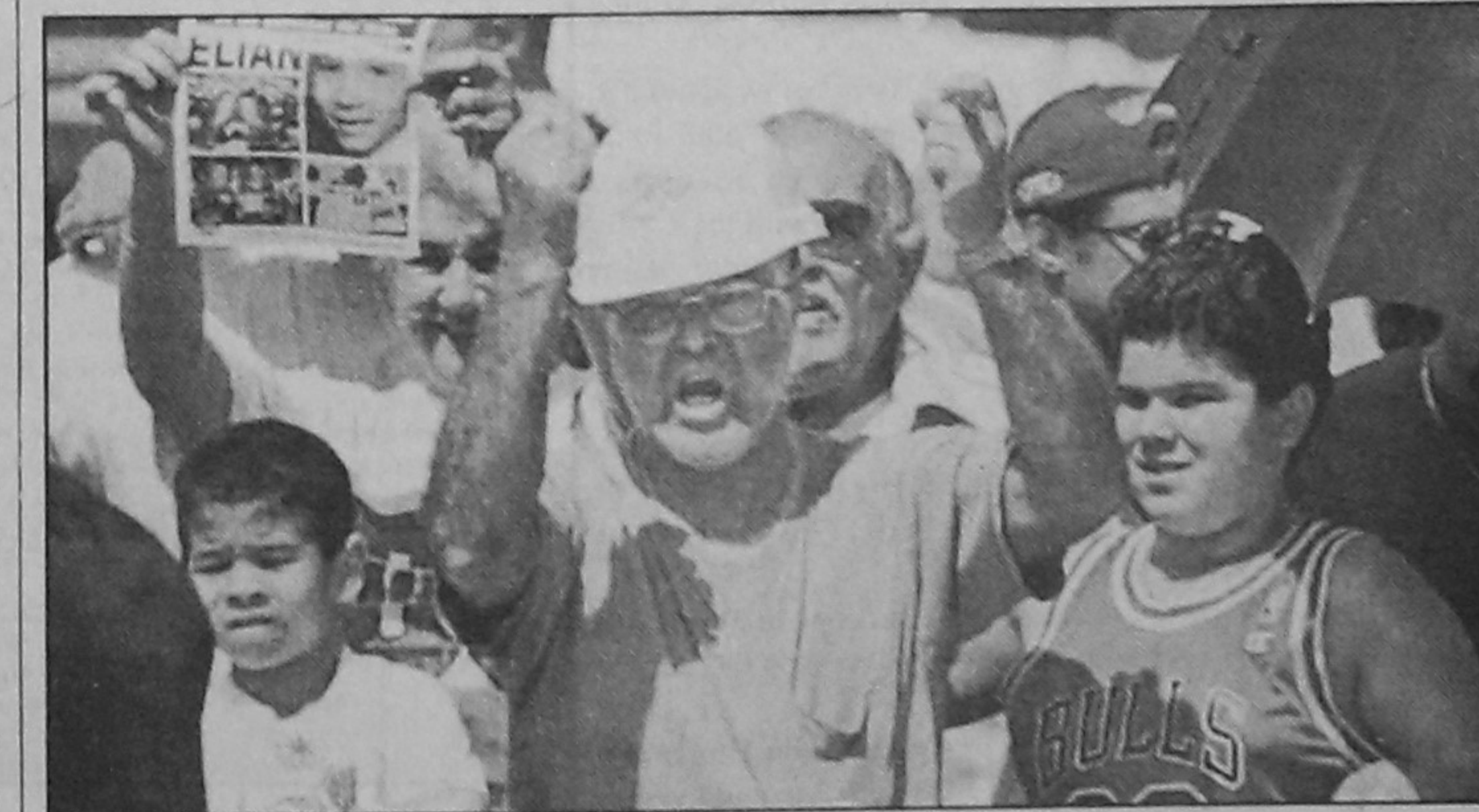
"While we can never undo the mistakes that led to the bombing, we are satisfied that the CIA has stood up... and taken appropriate responsibility for our mistakes," Harlow said.

The CIA actions were initially reported Saturday night by The New York Times on its Web site.

US-Chinese ties have been rocky since the inadvertent bombing last May, which occurred during NATO's 78-day air war. Three Chinese were killed in the bombing and 20 others were wounded. The US has said the intended bombing target was the Yugoslav Federal Directorate of Supply and Procurement headquarters.

After the bombing, Beijing suspended military contacts and talks on human rights, arms control, security issues and Chinese entry to the World Trade Organisation. Chinese government-run media said the bombing was intentional, and it inflamed the violent protests from stone-throwing mobs at the American Embassy in China.

Chinese officials had pushed that those responsible for the bombing be identified and punished.



Protesters yell in front of the home where Elian Gonzalez is staying with his relatives in Little Havana, Miami, on Saturday. Protesters demanding that Elian stay in the US have maintained a vigil outside the family's home. — AFP photo

## BRIEFLY

**Singapore PM leaves for China:** Singapore's Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong flew to China on Sunday, the first leg of a foreign trip that will also take him to Hong Kong, AP reports from Singapore.

Goh was accompanied by senior ministers and a business delegation, a statement from the prime minister's office said. In China, Goh will meet with President Jiang Zemin and Prime Minister Zhu Rongji. He will also travel to the cities of Xian, Qingdao and Shanghai. In Hong Kong, Goh will give the Singapore Chamber of Commerce Southeast Asia Lecture. He will also meet with Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa. It will be his first visit to Hong Kong since the July 1997 handover to China.

**Russia seizes Japanese boats:** Two Japanese trawlers have been seized by the Russian coast guard in the northern Sea of Okhotsk on suspicion of illegal fishing, a Japanese maritime official said Sunday, AP reports from Tokyo.

The captured boats arrived Saturday in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky on the Kamchatka Peninsula, said Mitsuru Akiyama, an official at the Maritime Safety Agency's Second Regional Maritime Safety Headquarters.

**Quake rattles Indonesia:** An intense undersea earthquake with an estimated magnitude of 5.4 has rattled central Indonesia, the Meteorology and Geophysics Agency said Sunday, AP reports from Jakarta.

There were no immediate reports of damage or casualties. The tremor, recorded at 11:28 pm (21:28 BST) Saturday, was centered off the northwest coast of the island of Sulawesi about 230 km north of Palu, said Dany, an official at the agency's Jakarta office.

**Rebels capture Colombian police chief:** Leftist guerrillas captured a top Colombian police official and three officers after their helicopter was shot down, killing three other officers earlier in the week, police said Saturday, AFP reports from Bogota.

Lieutenant Colonel Alvaro Leon Acosta, head of police in the Tulua region of del Valle province, is the highest ranking official captured by FARC, which has taken some 300 police and soldiers as prisoners over the last three years, Colombian police said in a statement. The helicopter was on an anti-drug trafficking patrol Wednesday in the mountainous Tulua region of southwestern Colombia — some 430 km from Bogota — when rebels shot it down.

**Iraqi Speaker re-elected:** Saadun Hammadi, a former prime minister, was re-elected speaker of Iraq's National Assembly on Sunday following the parliamentary polls of March 27, officials said, AFP reports from Baghdad.

The Shiite Muslim, standing as the sole candidate, won an absolute majority in the 250-seat assembly, which is made up mostly of members of President Saddam Hussein's Baath party. The US-educated economist, who has held several key posts including foreign and oil ministries was born in 1930.

## Clinton to meet Barak, Arafat separately

WASHINGTON, Apr 9: US President Bill Clinton will meet in Washington with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak on Tuesday and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on April 20, the White House said Saturday, reports AP.

President Clinton has invited Prime Minister Barak to meet with him on Tuesday, April 11 and Chairman Arafat to meet with him on Thursday, April 20, said a White House statement issued in New Orleans, Louisiana, where Clinton was travelling.

"Secretary (Madeleine) Albright will also be holding meetings with the two leaders. These separate consultations are part of the United States' continuing efforts to reach Arab-Israeli peace," the statement said.

## Emergency in Bolivia

LA PAZ, Apr 9: Bolivia's government declared a state of emergency Saturday to quell unrest in this Andean nation, but the move only angered protesters further and sparked new clashes with authorities, reports AP.

Renewed clashes between demonstrators protesting a water project in the central city of Cochabamba left two people dead and an estimated 25 injured.

The 90-day state of emergency, which gives President Hugo Banzer special powers to deal with the crisis, was declared early Saturday amid continuing unrest in Cochabamba and a new protest by members of a police unit in La Paz.

Leaders of the Single Union for Rural Workers Confederation said one protester identified as Rogelio Callisaya was shot dead in a clash in La Huchacaca, some 180 km south

of La Paz, and that three others were injured.

Government officials confirmed that the protester had died, but said it was as a result of "cardiac failure" while participating in a roadblock.

A 16-year-old protester died after being shot in the head while the army tried to remove a barricade erected by protesters.

Protesters also said that four people received bullet wounds in Cochabamba, but police have insisted they are only firing pellets and using teargas.

About a dozen police have been injured as they patrolled the city, suffering wounds from the rocks and other objects thrown by protesters.

The unrest has unsettled officials in Washington, who urged US citizens in Bolivia to exercise extreme caution, and discouraged Americans from travelling to the country.