



Refugees from the Indian Reang community walk towards a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) election rally at the Gachirampara Refugee Camp in Kanchanpur, some 210km north of Agartala yesterday. The State Assembly Elections will be held in the north-eastern Indian state of Mizoram on December 2.

Militants kill Pakistani soldier near Peshawar

AP, Peshawar

Militants fired a mortar shell into a village near the troubled Pakistani city of Peshawar yesterday, killing one soldier and wounding another, an official said. Surging violence in and around the capital of Pakistan's northwest region highlights how Taliban and al-Qaeda militants have gained ground along the Afghan border. In the past three days, unidentified gunmen have killed an American aid worker, abducted an Iranian diplomat and shot and wounded two foreign reporters in Peshawar. Zafullah Khan, a commander of the paramilitary Frontier Constabulary, said one mortar shell hit a camp in the village of Michni on Saturday morning, wounding the two soldiers, one of them fatally.

Lanka asks Tigers to surrender after taking key town

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's president yesterday asked Tamil Tigers to surrender after troops claimed re-taking a strategically important town from the separatist guerrillas following months of heavy fighting. President Mahinda Rajapakse said in a televised address to the nation that security forces had wrested control of the town of Pooneryn and the main northwestern coastal A-32 route in the morning. "The entire A-32 road and Pooneryn was captured by our security forces," the president said. "On this occasion, I ask (Tiger chief Velupillai) Prabhakaran to lay down arms and immediately come for talks." "The best thing he can do for the

(Tamil) people in the north is to lay down arms and surrender," he said. Pooneryn had been a Tiger stronghold since 1993 when the rebels overran the main military base after killing some 700 soldiers in a three-day offensive code-named "unceasing waves". The separatist rebels had also used the coastal area to launch artillery strikes against a military base on the northern edge of the government-controlled Jaffna peninsula vulnerable to long-range attacks. Defence officials said the Tigers appeared to have removed their 130-millimeter artillery guns from Pooneryn and taken them inland. The defence ministry described Saturday's capture of Pooneryn as the "greatest feat against terrorists" along the island's northwestern seaboard. The ministry said troops were closing in on the town of Kilinochchi, the political capital of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) further south. "Pitched battles are still going on in the area," the ministry said. "The terrorists are fast withdrawing" to the northwest. Sri Lanka's defence establishment has, however, made repeated claims since September that Kilinochchi is about to fall. But it later said stiff rebel resistance and monsoon rains had impeded the assault. Meanwhile, the air force deployed helicopter gunships to pound suspected Tiger strongholds in the Jaffna peninsula on Saturday morning in support of ground troops in the area, the military said. There was no immediate comment from the Tigers, who had said security forces had moved deeper into territory held by them in the northern parts of the country since mid-2007. The LTTE has been fighting since 1972 to carve out a homeland for minority Tamils from the majority Sinhalese community. Tens of thousands of people on both sides have been killed in the conflict. The latest reports came shortly before the country's parliament approved a new war budget allocating a record 1.6 billion dollars for defence in 2009, up from 1.5 billion dollars this year.

10 militants killed in eastern Afghanistan, says US Afghan insurgent leader captured

AP, Kabul

Afghan and coalition forces captured an insurgent leader in eastern Afghanistan, and in a separate operation 10 militants were killed in a firefight, the US military said yesterday. US forces said they grabbed a "key insurgent leader" in a joint raid with Afghan police Friday in a village in eastern Ghazni province. No shots were fired in the raid, the statement said. The captured man is responsible for the deaths of Afghan troops, bomb attacks on coalition forces and the kidnapping of aid workers, according to the statement. A spokesman declined to give further information on the leader's identity while they search for his confederates.

Coalition forces also killed 10 militants in a strike against a bomb-making cell in the eastern Paktya province Friday, the US military said. The troops were targeting several key figures in a network run by Jalaluddin Haqqani, a militant leader believed to operate out of Pakistan, the military statement said. The coalition forces were attacked during the strike and returned fire, killing their assailants, it said. The US military said those killed were Haqqani militants and foreign fighters known to have planned and conducted bomb attacks on civilians and coalition forces, and to coordinate suicide bombings. The military has not yet determined whether any of the targeted

leaders were among those killed, said US Army spokeswoman Master Sgt. Melissa Rolan. The United States once considered Jalaluddin Haqqani a "freedom fighter" against the former Soviet Union, but he and his son Sirajuddin are now seen as closely associated with the Taliban. Suicide attacks have been one of the Taliban's preferred tactics in their assaults against Afghan and foreign troops. Most of the victims of such attacks have been civilians. Afghan police said two national intelligence agents and one police officer were killed late Friday in a bomb attack on their vehicle south of Kabul. They were hit while responding to an earlier bomb attack that injured three police officers, regional police commander Gen. Zalmai Orykhal said.

Thaksin divorces wife

AFP, Bangkok

Thailand's ousted former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra and his wife have divorced after 32 years of marriage, his spokesman said yesterday. Thai newspapers reported that Thaksin, who was in power from 2001 until he was toppled in a 2006 coup, finalized the separation from his wife Pojaman at the Thai consulate in Hong Kong on Friday. The couple have been living in exile since August to avoid jail sentences in their homeland and last week had their British visas cancelled, leaving them searching for a new refuge. "I have had it confirmed by a credible person in his team that Thaksin and Pojaman have divorced. But I have no details," Thaksin's personal spokesman Phongthep Thepkajana told AFP. There was no immediate comment from the Thai consulate or from Hong Kong authorities. Telecoms billionaire Thaksin announced the divorce at a dinner of MPs from Thailand's ruling

People Power Party in Hong Kong on Friday night, the Bangkok Post reported. The cause of the divorce was not immediately clear, but Thai sources and media reports said it was more likely to be for legal or financial reasons than personal ones. A source close to Thaksin's family in Thailand confirmed the report but said that it would be a "divorce on paper" for practical or economic reasons. "Thaksin and his wife remain very close and they are even closer since their problems began in Thailand," the source told AFP on condition of anonymity. After the coup, Thaksin, 59, and Pojaman, 51, returned to Thailand in February 2008 but fled back to Britain in August after Pojaman and her brother were sentenced to three years in jail for tax evasion. In October former policeman Thaksin was sentenced to two years in prison in absentia for corruption, and during his travels last weekend Britain revoked their entry visas.



File photo shows former Thai prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra (L) walks with his wife Pojaman at the military airport in Bangkok on February 19, 2006, during a farewell ceremony for French President Jacques Chirac.

Thais stage elaborate funeral for king's sister

AP, Bangkok

To the wail of conch shells and the thunder of cannon fire, crimson-clad soldiers pulled a gilded chariot containing the body of the revered Thai king's sister to a seven-story pyre where she will be cremated yesterday. Princess Galyani Vadhana, the elder sister of King Bhumibol Adulyadej, died of abdominal cancer 10 months ago at the age of 84. More than 2,000 soldiers in dress uniform marched alongside the elaborate chariot containing an urn with the remains of the princess in a funeral procession from the glittering Grand Palace through the heart of old Bangkok, the capital. Tens of thousands of Thais lined the route of the procession under clear skies to bid farewell to the late princess, while millions of others are expected to watch the procession on television.

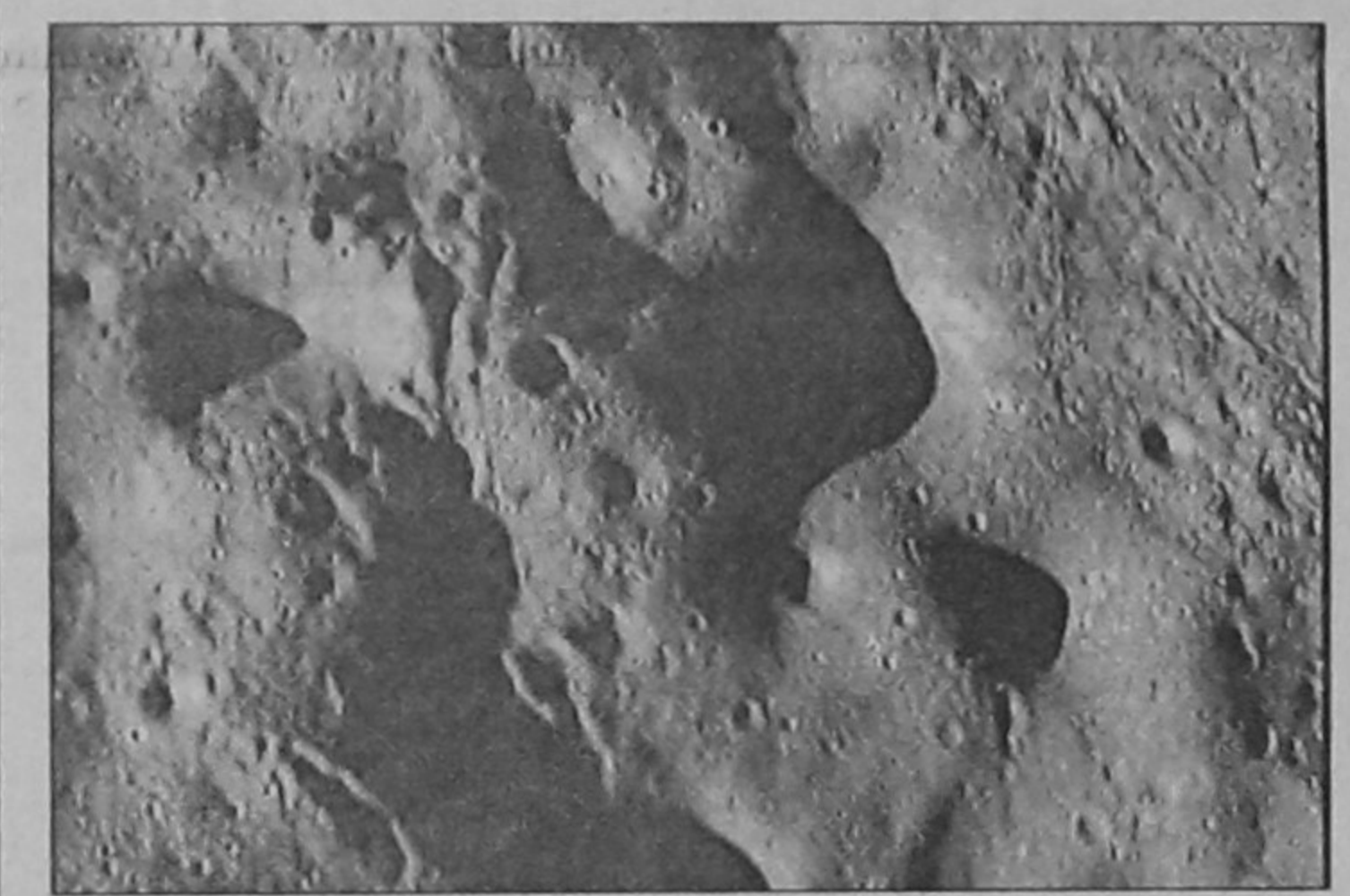
Every major terror threat involves Pakistan: CIA

THE DAWN, Washington

CIA director Michael Hayden has warned that every major terrorist threat confronting the world has ties to Pakistan. In a speech to the Atlantic Council on Thursday, Hayden also claimed that al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden was hiding in Fata. "Let me be very clear. Today, virtually every major terrorist threat that my agency is aware of has threads back to the tribal areas," Hayden told the Washington-based think-tank. The CIA director, however, acknowledged that Bin Laden was isolated from the day-to-day opera-

tions of al-Qaeda, although the organisation was still the greatest threat to the US. "If there is a major strike on this country (the US), it will bear the fingerprints of al-Qaeda," he warned. Gen Hayden, however, depicted al-Qaeda chief as an extremely frustrated man who spent all his time trying to survive and had no time for guiding his militants. "[Bin Laden] is putting a lot of energy into his own survival, a lot of energy into his own security," the CIA chief said. "He appears to be largely isolated from the day-to-day operations of the organisation he nominally heads."

Capturing Bin Laden, however, remained the US government's top priority, he added. "His death or capture clearly would have a significant impact on the confidence of his followers - both core al-Qaeda and unaffiliated extremists throughout the world," he said. After depicting Pakistan as the hub of all major terrorist activities in the world, the CIA chief also conceded that Pakistan faced a complex situation. "While the problem looks easy from thousands of miles away, it's extremely difficult up close because of the tribal issues," he said.



In this handout picture released on Nov 14, shows the surface of the moon taken by Moon Impact Probe (MIP) shortly before landing after separation from India's Chandrayaan-1 spacecraft.

India celebrates planting its flag on moon

AP, New Delhi

India rejoiced yesterday at joining an elite club by planting its flag on the moon as the country's space agency released the first pictures of the cratered surface taken by its maiden lunar mission. A probe sent late Friday from the orbiting mother spacecraft took pictures and gathered other

data India needs for a future moon landing as it plummeted to a crash-landing at the moon's south pole, said Indian Space Research Organization spokesman B.R. Guruprasad. The box-shaped probe was painted with India's saffron, white and green flag, sparking celebrations in the country that is striving to become a world power.

Myanmar opposition leaders jailed for 65 yrs

AFP, Yangon

One of Myanmar's most prominent activists was sentenced to 65 years in jail along with two other pro-democracy leaders in connection with the 2007 anti-junta protests, family members said yesterday. Min Ko Naing is considered Myanmar's top activist after detained Nobel peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and was a founding member of an opposition group that emerged from a failed student-led uprising in 1988. Relatives said it had emerged that he was among 23 members of

the so-called "88 Generation" who received heavy jail terms on Tuesday this week at the notorious Insein prison on the outskirts of Yangon. Leading activists Ko Ko Gyi and Htay Kywe were also in the same batch who received the sentences from a closed court at the prison, family members said after visiting the jail on Saturday. "We got a chance to see them in Insein prison this afternoon after we were told (after visiting another prison) that they were taken back to Yangon," a family member told AFP on condition of anonymity. "They were sentenced on Tuesday to 65 years imprisonment each," the family member said, adding that they were found guilty on charges including violating the electronic act and for contempt of court. Min Ko Naing and Ko Ko Gyi spent up to 15 years in jail as what rights group Amnesty International described as "prisoners of conscience" for their roles in the 1988 uprising. "I feel really sorry for them as they have already served at least a decade in prison so now they have to stay there for most of their lifetime," the family member said.

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Legal Notice in the Supreme Court of Bangladesh High Court Division. Matter No. 186 of 2008. Mr. Ashfaquzzaman Khan vs. M & H Telecom Ltd. and others. Notice is hereby given for all concerned that an application under Section 233 of the Companies Act, 1994 for minority protection filed on behalf of the above named petitioner was admitted by the Company Bench of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh comprising Mr. Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury on 03.11.2008 and has been fixed for hearing on 04.12.2008.

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