



Indian schoolchildren pose while forming the numbers '26/11' as they observe a two-minute silence for the victims of the Mumbai attacks at a school in Amritsar yesterday. Hindu nationalists burn an effigy of Pakistani terrorist accused Ajmal Kasab (inset) during a protest in New Delhi marking the one-year anniversary of the terror attacks.

Mumbai commemorates anniversary of attacks

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

People drawn from all walks of life lit candles and attended memorial services and National Security Commandos and the police paraded the streets as India observed the first anniversary of terror attacks on Mumbai on this day leaving 166 people dead.

A bunch of ten Pakistani terrorists carrying AK-47 rifles sneaked into Mumbai through the Arabian Sea under the cover of darkness of the night of November 26 and attacked iconic luxury hotels and other landmarks of Mumbai, turning a railway station into a scene of bloody carnage and paralysing India's commercial heart for 60 hours.

The anniversary of the attack was commemorated across India with sombre ceremonies, candlelight vigils and remembrances for those killed and with a vow to fight terror in all its manifestations.

A blood donation camp was organised at the Chatrapati Shivaji railway terminal in Mumbai, where 58 died and 104 were injured in the attack while the police, used the occasion to exhibit their upgraded equip-

ment as India sent out the strongest message against terror.

A fleet of new camouflaged armoured vehicles and rapid intervention vehicles manned by commandos with guns drawn made its way down Marine Drive, site of the five-star Taj Mahal hotel, which had come under attack, as a marching band played. Nearly 700 commandos and police officers marched out onto the adjacent sandy beach.

A shrine to Tukaram Ombale, a police officer who died as he helped capture the lone surviving gunman, Ajmal Kasab, was decorated with wreaths and garlands and a large photo was put up at the corner where he died.

People gathered at the India Gate in New Delhi, the Taj Mahal hotel in Mumbai and other cities to remember the terror victims and vowed to put up a united fight against terrorism.

On the eve of the anniversary last night, religious leaders and diplomats from the US, Germany, Canada, Britain, Israel and Italy had gathered at a Jewish centre in Mumbai, where six people were killed by the terrorists, to remember the victims.

US, China will not meddle in Indo-Pak affairs

Says Manmohan

ANI, Washington

Rounding up his four-day visit of Washington before heading for Trinidad to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh on Wednesday said that he had received a reassurance from US President Barack Obama that the reference to South Asia (India and Pakistan) in last week's US-China joint statement did not mean that Washington or Beijing would interfere in the affairs of these nations.

Interacting with the media before his departure on a whole host of issues, including China and Pakistan, Dr Singh said, "Yes it (US-China Joint Statement) was talked about. President Obama gave an assurance that the US-China joint statement did not mean interference by a third nation in India-Pakistan affairs."

He further went on to say, "I did mention to President Obama that like other countries, I welcome the peaceful rise of China and we are discussing the border issue."

When asked a question about the annoyance of US on negotiations with China, Dr

Singh said: "We had purposeful negotiations with China and similar negotiations with US."

Earlier this week, in a question and answer session with Richard Haas, the president of the Council of Foreign Relations (CFR), Dr. Singh said that relations between New Delhi and Beijing have been progressing well over the last five years, hiccups notwithstanding.

Candidly admitting that both countries still have differences over the "border problem", Singh said that he was hopeful about resolving the decades-old issue through dialogue at various levels.

However, he said, China's growth as an economic power must be recognised and the rest of the world must engage with it.

"We want the world to prepare for the peaceful rise of China as a major power. Engagement is the right strategy, both for India and the United States. It has been very hard to engage China in the last five years. We have to recognise that the border problem exists, and that we must resolve it through dialogue. India and China are aware that peace and tranquillity should be maintained," said Singh.

Pakistan voices warnings over US 'surge' in Afghanistan

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan stepped up warnings yesterday that an expected US decision to send tens of thousands more soldiers to Afghanistan could destabilise its insurgency-ridden southwest.

"Our only concern is that when US sends more troops to Afghanistan's Helmand area, if there will be influx of militants they will be moving to Baluchistan," Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani told a press conference.

President Barack Obama is widely expected to order more than 30,000 additional American troops into battle against an emboldened Taliban-led insurgency in Afghanistan when he unveils a new Afghan strategy next week.

"This is the concern that we already discussed with the US administration, that influx of militants towards Baluchistan should be taken care of otherwise that can destabilise Baluchistan," said Gilani, speaking in English.

"A stable Afghanistan is in Pakistan's interest -- but at the same time we also do not want our country to be destabilised," said Gilani.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, US National Security Adviser James Jones and CIA director Leon Panetta have all travelled to Pakistan in the last month for a series of top-

level meetings.

"We have asked US administration to consult us in case of any paradigm shift in the policy... so that we can formulate our strategy accordingly," said the Pakistani prime minister.

Obama is due to unveil the new approach after weeks of deliberations and lay out an exit strategy for withdrawing forces with the war now into a ninth year since the September 11 attacks.

Security has drastically deteriorated in Pakistan since Islamabad joined the US-led "war on terror" and hundreds of Taliban and al-Qaeda-linked militants fled into the country after the US-led invasion of Afghanistan.

Suicide attacks and bombings have killed more than 2,550 people in 29 months and around 2,000 troops have died fighting Islamist militants since 2002.

In the southwestern province of Baluchistan, hundreds of people have died in a separatist insurgency since 2004.

Obama is reportedly increasing pressure on Islamabad to fight not just militants who attack within Pakistan, but those using Pakistan as a base from which to fight the Kabul government and Western troops in Afghanistan.

Eat less meat to save Earth and your heart

ANI, London

In a new research, a team of scientists has determined that eating less meat may help save planet Earth, as well as reduce the risk of heart attacks in humans.

According to a report in New Scientist, the research was done by Alan Dangour of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and colleagues.

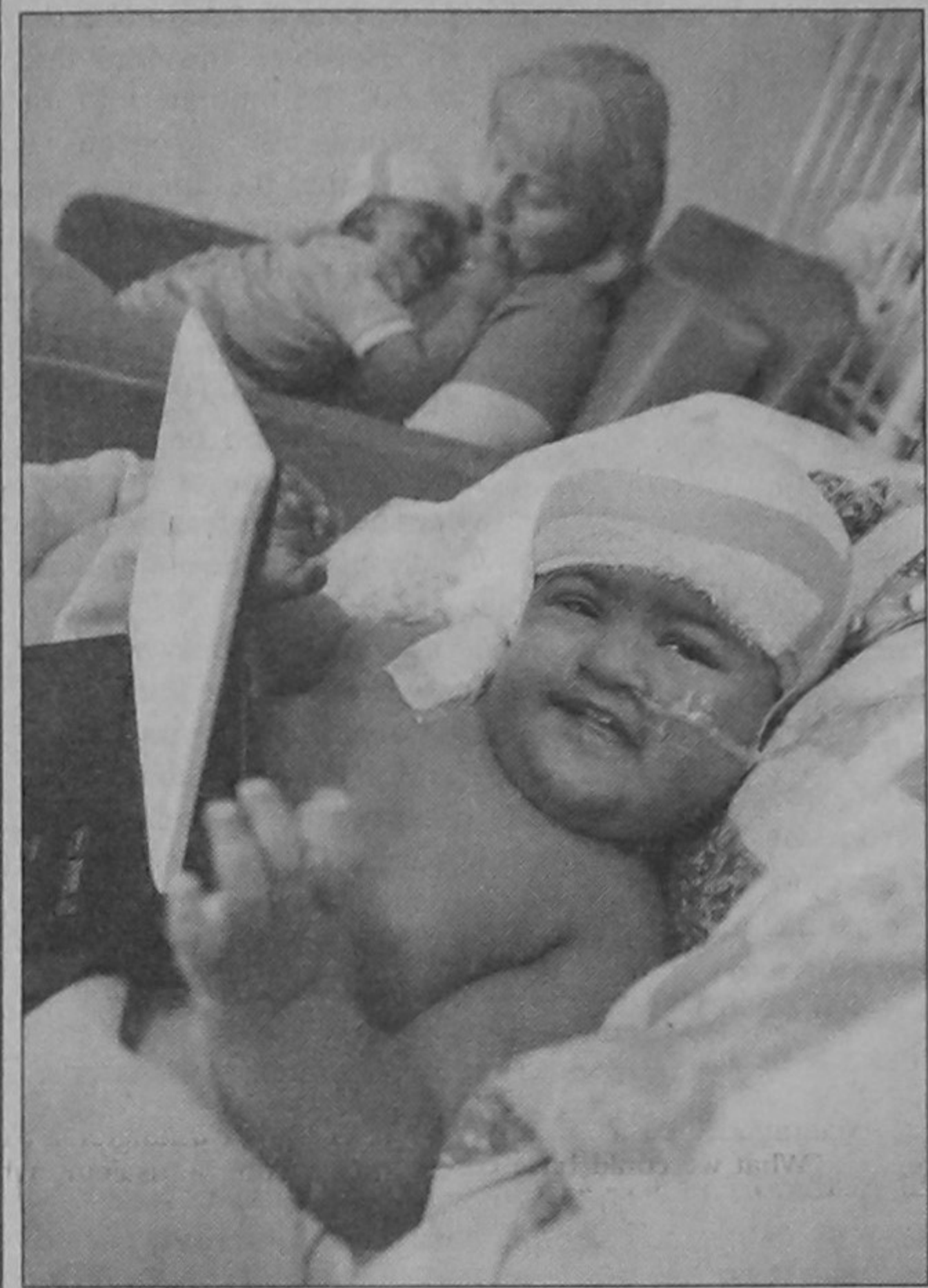
The team explored the livestock industry's potential to help the UK halve its carbon emissions by 2030, relative to 1990 levels, and the knock-on effect on the nation's health.

They found that the industry could slash its emissions, but only if the livestock the UK produces, and the meat the nation consumes, drops by 30 percent.

Farms must also optimise their energy efficiency by, for example, capturing carbon in manure.

The health pay-off would be considerable.

18,000 fewer people would die prematurely in the UK each year from heart attacks - a reduction of 17 per cent - as they would eat less of the saturated fats found in meat.



Handout photo shows former Bangladeshi conjoined twins Krishna (front) and Trishna (back) with guardian Moira Kelly at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne yesterday. Trishna and Krishna appeared to have beaten the odds with their miracle story of survival, both awaking from landmark separation surgery happy and well.

BENAZIR KILLING UN probe seeks 3-month extension

ANI, Islamabad

The United Nations inquiry commission probing the assassination of former Pakistan prime minister Benazir Bhutto has sought a three-month extension from the Pakistan government.

According to sources, Chile's Ambassador to the UN, Hernando Munoz, who is the chairman of the inquiry committee, has sought more time to submit the report, saying the delay is being caused due to the adverse security scenario in Pakistan.

"We're working hard and advancing, but there is a great deal of work to be done," The Daily Times quoted Munoz, as saying.

Myanmar rebels cashing in on illegal drugs stocks: UN

AFP, Bangkok

Military-ruled Myanmar's rebel ethnic groups are increasingly cashing in on their illegal drugs hoards on expectations of a junta crack-down, a UN representative said yesterday.

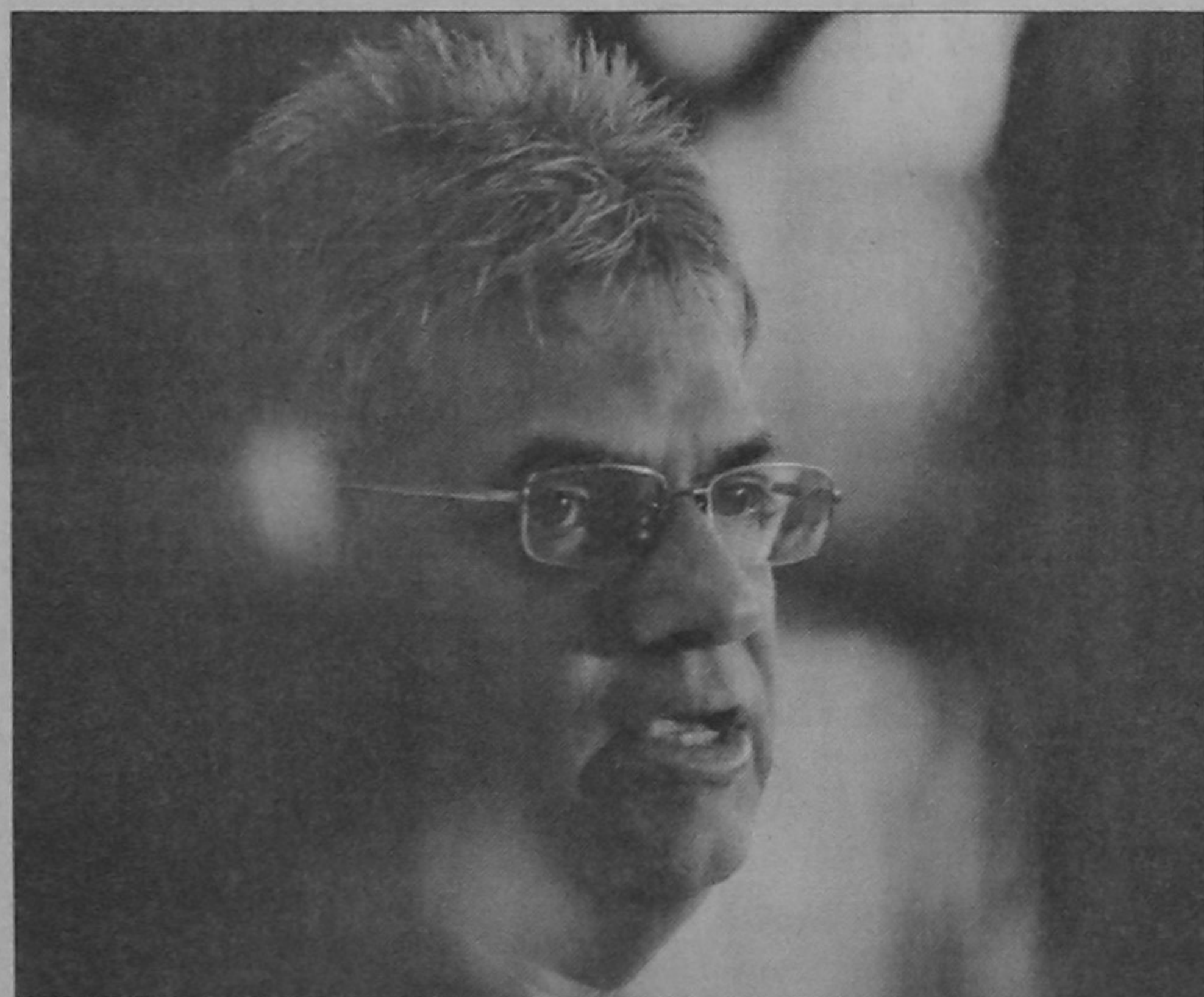
Minority groups that feel under threat from central government are using drugs trafficking to sustain themselves and keep control of their territories, said Gary Lewis, a representative for the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Lok Sabha adjourned over clashes in West Bengal

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, New Delhi

Lok Sabha was adjourned Thursday following an uproar in the house by Trinamool Congress and Left parties over violent clashes in West Bengal's Hooghly district that left one man dead and five injured.

When Trinamool Congress leader Sudip Bandyopadhyay tried to raise the matter in the house during zero hour, the Left parties led by the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) opposed vehemently.



Sri Lanka's main opposition leader Ranil Wickremesinghe announces former army chief General Sarath Fonseka as the United National Party (UNP) presidential candidate in Colombo yesterday. Fonseka, widely credited for the military defeat of the Tamil Tiger rebels this year, will take on incumbent Mahinda Rajapakse in upcoming presidential election called two years ahead of schedule.

Lankan opposition backs ex-military chief in polls

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's main opposition party said yesterday it would back former military chief Sarath Fonseka in his bid to unseat President Mahinda Rajapakse in upcoming elections.

The United National Party (UNP) became the second opposition party, after the Marxist JVP earlier this week, to throw its weight behind Fonseka, 58, who is widely expected to confirm his candidature at the weekend.

"We back General Fonseka to be the common opposition candidate," UNP leader Ranil Wickremesinghe told reporters.

The UNP said it had secured an agreement with the former general, who has been widely credited with the strategy that led to the defeat of Tamil rebels in May after decades of ethnic bloodshed.

"I have got broad support from most opposition political parties. But I will officially announce my intentions whether to accept the post as a common candidate on Sunday," Fonseka told AFP afterwards.

Fonseka quit as chief of defence staff this month, after a rift with Rajapakse over who should take credit for crushing separatist Tamil Tiger rebels in a government offensive.

After the fighting ended in May, he was moved from army chief to become chief of defence staff, a more ceremonial position that reportedly left him feeling sidelined because of his lack of command powers.

Wickremesinghe, echoing comments from the JVP earlier this week, said Fonseka had promised to scrap the all-powerful presidency, which concentrates executive power in the head of state.

"We will bring in the necessary provisions to abolish the executive presidency. We will ensure General Fonseka's victory ends the Rajapakse regime," he said.

The UNP said Fonseka had agreed to dissolve the current cabinet and appoint an interim government to conduct parliamentary elections, which are due by April.

Opposition political parties have accused Rajapakse of granting key state positions to family members and of wanton corruption.

The president's younger brother Gotabhaya Rajapakse is the defence secretary, who also played a key role in crushing Tamil Tigers and ending Asia's longest running ethnic conflict.

However, the Rajapakse brothers and Fonseka fell out after all three vied to take credit for the victory.

India expects US to lift tech transfer sanctions

AFP, Washington

India said Wednesday that it expected the United States to lift "significant" restrictions on American technology transfer to the Asian giant following talks between leaders of the two nations.

US President Barack Obama and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh agreed after talks in Washington Tuesday that "strengthening high technology trade between their countries is in the spirit of their strategic dialogue and partnership," a joint statement said.

Expanding on the statement, Singh's economic advisor Montek Singh Ahluwalia said Wednesday that on the economic front, "the principal action" the United States had to take to advance collaboration was "removal of the technology transfer controls."

He said the US govern-

ment had assured India that a "high level review" of the technology restrictions was underway, four years after the two countries signed a landmark civilian nuclear agreement.

"We are very hopeful that as a result of that review there will be a significant easing of technology controls," said Ahluwalia, speaking at a forum held by the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington.

The controls were part of the 1998-imposed economic sanctions on India after it conducted a series of nuclear weapons tests.

They prohibit American companies from exporting certain goods and services to various Indian entities without first obtaining an export license.

However, relations between the two countries have improved significantly in recent years.

Blair knew in advance Saddam had no WMD

ANI, London

Former British prime minister Tony Blair's government knew ten days in advance before declaring war on Iraq that Saddam Hussein did not have access to weapons of mass destruction, according to the inquiry into the war.

Inspectors in Iraq had informed the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that they believed that Saddam might not have chemical and biological weapons, but the new intelligence report was dismissed with British and US troops massed on the border.

The then Foreign Office's director-general of defence

and intelligence, Sir William Ehrman, told the inquiry that information was received just before the invasion of Iraq on March 20, 2003, The Times reported.

"We did at the very end, I think on March 10, get a report that chemical weapons might have remained disassembled and Saddam hadn't yet ordered their assembly. There was also a suggestion that Iraq might lack warheads capable of effective dispersal of agents," he said.

"I don't think it invalidated the point about the programmes he had. It was more about use. From the counter-proliferation point of

view it just proved (Saddam) had been lying and that he had prohibited items," he said.

Hans Blix, the chief UN weapons inspector, told the Foreign Office at the end of February 2003 that Saddam might not have weapons of mass destruction, the inquiry was told.

Blair continued to say there was a risk to national security from WMD without mentioning the new intelligence.

Tim Dowse, the Foreign Office's head of counter-proliferation at the time, said that in 2001 the threat from Iraq had been placed behind those from Iran, Libya and North Korea.



Supporters of ruling Pakistani People's Party (PPP) gather during their party's founding day in Karachi on Wednesday. Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari said the PPP remains strong and committed to defend democracy and will complete its term foiling the "attempts of political actors" to de-rail the system.

Mullah Omar rejects Karzai call for talks

AFP, Kabul

Mullah Mohammad Omar, leader of Afghanistan's Taliban militia, on Wednesday rejected a call from President Hamid Karzai for peace talks, in a statement issued ahead of the Muslim festival of Eid-ul-Azha.

Karzai was inaugurated last week after winning a fraudulent August poll and used a speech to again call for the Taliban to rejoin the political process in Afghanistan, where about 100,000 US and Nato troops are stationed.

"The people of Afghanistan will not agree to negotiation which prolongs and legitimises the invader's military presence in our beloved country. Afghanistan is our home," a Taliban statement quoted

Omar as saying.

The elusive leader of the Islamist militia, which were unseated in the 2001 US-led invasion of Afghanistan, accused foreign powers of seeking negotiations to "prolong their evil process of colonisation and occupation."

"The cunning enemy wants to attack people's crowded places such as mosques and other similar places in order to malign the Mujahideen," Omar said.

The one-eyed militant commander called on his fighters to "guard against these activities of the enemy and fully avoid carrying out any similar activity. The well-being and prosperity of the people should be your priority."