# INTERNATIONAL



The two women presidents, Gloria Arroyo of the Philippines (centre-L) and Megawati Sukarnoputri of Indonesia (centre-R) are surrounded by their male counterparts during a group photo session on the opening day of the 13th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit in Kuala Lumpur on Monday. NAM leaders have backed down from an attempt to put pressure on fellow-member North Korea to drop its nuclear weapons programme. Clockwise from top-left are President of Pakistan Pervez Musharraf, Prime Minister of Malaysia Mahathir Mohamad, President of Cuba Fidel Castro, President of Equatorial Guinea Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of Madagascar Marc Ravalomanana, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea Michael Somare and Prime Minister of Laos Bounngang Vorachith.

# **NAM** nations line up against war on Iraq

#### **REUTERS.** Kuala Lumpur

Kings and presidents from more than 100 countries massed in Malaysia Monday to show that the developing world, two-thirds of the UN's membership, wants no war in Irag and to tell Baghdad to disarm.

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, host of the three-yearly summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), set the tone with a fierce condemnation of war and an attack on what he called the West's hypocrisy and the warmongering of richer nations.

"No single nation should be allowed to police the world, least of all to decide what action to take, when," he said.

In keeping with draft statements to be approved by the 116 leaders who represent three billion of the world's population, Mahathir joined the global chorus calling on Iraq to comply with UN resolutions, saying: "Everyone must disarm.

Urging reform of the United Nations to ensure world disarmament, Mahathir said war solved nothing. Outside in the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur, police threw a security net around the summit venue and helicopters buzzed overhead

"War must be outlawed ... War is primitive," he told the opening of the twoday summit that saw the admittance of two more nations to NAM bringing its membership to 116. "There must be a new world order in which power is shared equitably by all."

South African President Thabo Mbeki took up the theme, stressing the need for all countries, big and small, to abide by international agreements.

He underscored NAM's desire that the United Nations -- and not the United States -- should be the top world arbiter of international crises such as Iraq.

"Peace and stability in our countries and the rest of the world demands that all of us, including those who are incomparably more powerful than we are, should respect the findings of the weapons inspectors and the decisions of the Security Council fully and without reservation.

The group was set to issue a statement demanding that Baghdad comply with UN resolutions and scrap any weapons of mass destruction, but it would also take a swipe at the United States by stressing the need for multilateral, not unilateral, action

The United States, backed by Britain, is massing troops on Iraq's border and threatening war unless President Saddam Hussein surrenders his alleged weapons of mass destruction.

Remarks from UN Secretary General Kofi Annan read at the summit underscored the need for Iraq to disarm and to cooperate

With many Muslim nations belonging to NAM, the grouping was likely to plead for a peaceful resolution of the confrontation with Iraq and stress the importance of respect for UN processes as NAM strives to ensure it remains relevant.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Naji Sabri said he was delighted at the stand of the developing world led by Mahathir.

"This is excellent, more than excellent. It shows the conscience of the people of the non-aligned countries."

Sabri backed Mahathir's appeal for peace and seized the opportunity to attack the United States.



### Norah reigns supreme at Grammv

AFP, New York

Norah Jones, the daughter of Indian sitar maestro Ravi Shankar, cemented her reputation as the hottest newcomer on the US music scene by winning a fistful of trophies at the 45th Grammy Awards on Sunday.

The 23-year-old Grammy debutante, who was virtually unknown a year ago, won in all of the five categories for which she had been nominated, including Album of the Year, the evening's top honour.

Her haul meant that Jones had tied Lauryn Hill and Alicia Keys for most Grammy wins by a female artist in a single evening

# Sharon inks coalition deal with centrist party

### 9 Palestinians, Israeli killed in ME violence

community

#### REUTERS, Jerusalem

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon brought the centrist Shinui Party into his coalition on Monday, ensuring a slim majority in parliament that will allow him to form a government, a

spokesman for Sharon said. The deal was closed a day after the centre-left Labour Party abandoned coalition talks, leaving Sharon without the more moderate face he sought ahead of anticipated US pressure for concessions to the Palestinians after any war in Iraq.

Sharon assured his rightist Likud party of a slim 61-seat majority in the 120-member parliament following a day of violence in which Israeli forces killed nine Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and an Israeli soldier was shot dead.

Curbing such violence, which has raged since the start of the nearly 29-month Palestinian uprising for independence, will be one of the central tasks of the incoming government, which will also have to deal with a spiralling economic crisis

Sharon signed a deal with Shinui, a stridently secular party, after bringing into his coalition the justice, interior and national infra-National Religious Party (NRP), a structure champion of Jewish settlements on Shinui's parliamentary strength

The lineup of the proposed new government would freeze out ultra-Orthodox parties that have tradition-

ally served as the kingmakers of Israeli politics. Sharon had initially sought a wide "national unity" coalition that would have included the centre-left Labour Party. But the two parties could not reach an agreement on

how to deal with the Palestinian uprising. Labour's dovish chairman Amram Mitzna declared an end to

talks on the alliance after the coalition deal with NRP was signed. "The NRP's position suits him (Sharon) better," Mitzna said in a speech to Labour members, pre-

dicting the Israeli leader would make no breakthrough toward peace with Palestinians. Together with the NRP's six parliamentary seats, the 15 held by likely coalition partner Shinui and Likud's 40 lawmakers, Sharon now

commands 61 seats in the assem-Under the coalition agreement signed overnight, Shinui will hold five ministerial portfolios, including

families Gissin said Sharon would con-

tinue talks with smaller parties to try to expand his coalition. Sharon, who won a sweeping

electoral victory in January has until at least the end of February to form a government whose main tasks will be to tackle the Palestinian uprising and an economic crisis.

Meanwhile, Israeli forces killed eight Palestinians and an Israeli soldier was shot dead on Sunday as Israel's centre-left Labour Party said it was pulling out of talks on joining Ariel Sharon's coalition

Israeli troops also shot dead a "suspicious" Palestinian in the West Bank who ignored orders to stop, according to military sources.

The deaths raised to 42 the number of Palestinians killed this week, most in Israeli military raids into Gaza prompted by cross-border rocket attacks by the Islamic militant group Hamas.

"We hold Israel fully responsible for this escalation," senior Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat told Reuters

On the political front, Israel's centre-left Labour Party said it was pulling out of talks on forming a coalition after Prime Minister Sharon signed a coalition deal with the pro-settlement National Religious Party (NRP). The decision dashed Sharon's hopes of forming a unity government to try to provide much-needed economic stability to Israel, which has been shaken by a 29-month-old Palestinian uprising for statehood.



# UN says no to Iraq's missile compromise

#### France keeps veto option wide open

Iraq said it is "serious about solving" a UN order to start destroying its Al Samoud 2 missile program by the end of the week, but asked the United Nations to reconsider, A UN official in Baghdad said that wasn't an option

ons inspectors insisted Sunday night that Baghdad is "clean" of weapons of mass destruction and suggested the United Nations and Iraq could come up with a compromise over an order to destroy the missiles, whose range has been tested at above the 93-mile limit imposed by the at the end of the 1991 Gulf War.

"The missile was and is still being researched and developed and hasn't reached its final stage. The weights are not final." Lt. Gen. Hossam Mohamed Amin said.

inspectors) that they randomly range will be less.

to chief weapons inspector Hans lix last week proposing he reconsider. "We are still waiting for a response," he said.

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UN Secretary General Kofi

telling Time magazine in an interview to be published Monday that "of course they have no credibility' and "diplomacy may need to be backed up by force.

inventory of Al Samoud 2 components on Monday, going to two factories that make the missile's guidance systems and engines. They also went to a chemical and explosives plant and an antiaircraft missile maintenance facility, Iraq's Information Ministry said.

Iraq's response on the Al Blix, too, expressed skepticism Samoud 2 will likely be a key factor over Irag's claims to have in determining how the UN Security destroyed the stocks of anthrax Council votes on a resolution the and VX nerve agent. Blix told Time United States is expected to introhe found it "a bit odd" that Baghdad, with "one of the bestduce early next week designed to win approval for an attack on Iraq. organised regimes in the Arab The United States has said it may world," had no records of the subgo ahead with an attack even if it stances' destruction. doesn't win Security Council

AP, Baghdad

Iraq's chief liaison to UN weap-

"We have suggested to (the

choose any missile they want and check its range. We are sure its Ămin said Iraq had sent a letter

official said on condition of ano-

Annan said he expected Baghdad would go ahead with the destruction in the end. "If they refused to destroy the

weapons, the Security Council will have to make a decision," Annan said during a trip to Turkey. "I don't see why they would not destroy them.

Blix offered a harsher view

"Inspections may need to be backed up by pressure," he said.

The inspectors continued their

was a ploy by the United States

and President Bush. "The little Bush continues to despise the United Nations and the Security Council," the government daily Al-Jumhuriya said

France, which has opposed any resolution authorising war on Iraq, said Monday that it opposes "a superpower that runs the affairs of the world" without UN consensus.

"At the same time, Saddam Hussein should give tangible and concrete proof now" that he holds no weapons of mass destruction. French Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy said told RTL television.

Reuters adds: Turkey's foreign minister said he expects his country's parliament will vote Tuesday on whether to allow the US to base troops in Turkey for a war on Iraq.

Yasar Yakis said the "probability is high" for a Tuesday vote. He said 15 outstanding issues in negotiations with Washington on the economic, political and military conditions of the deployment should be resolved by then.

occupied land and an opponent of a Palestinian state, Sharon spokesman Raanan Gissin said.

Shinui, led by former journalist Yosef "Tommy" Lapid, became Israel's third largest party in the January 28 election, riding a wave of resentment among secular Israelis over privileges enjoyed by the country's large ultra-Orthodox

surged in the January election on a platform opposed to the exemption of ultra-Orthodox men from military

service and religious control over civil issues such as marriage According to the Likud state

ment. Shinui and NRP have agreed to revisit several laws that deal with the military draft of ultra-Orthodox, and government subsidies for large



South Korea's outgoing President Kim Dae-Jung (C in car) waves to presidential staff while leaving the presidential Blue House on Monday on Kim's last day in office. Kim said reconciliation with North Korea must go on, defending his hallmark 'sunshine' policy of engagement with Pyongyang, as he will end his five-year-term on Tuesday to leave the presidency to his successor Roh Moo-Hyun, who has pledged to pursue reconciliation with the Stalinist state.

But a UN official in Baghdad said Sunday night that the response had already come - in the form of Blix's order Friday to begin destroying the missiles by the end of this week

"This is not negotiable," the

approval Editorials in Iraq's official press on Monday said the new resolution



Australian actress Nicole Kidman poses after winning the BAFTA best actress award for her role in "The Hours" at the British Film Academy Awards ceremony at London's Leicester Square Odeon Cinema on Sunday.

# Generals see red as India mulls cut in military spending

#### AFP, New Delhi

India is likely to slash its defence budget this week as part of all-round austerity measures, but commanders warn that scaled-down military spending could set back modernisation projects and endanger national security.

Government officials say they expect a 10 percent cut in defence PHOTO: AFF budgetary allocations for the financial year beginning April 1 as part of Finance Minister Jaswant Singh's bid to stop India's fiscal deficit from rocketing past the current 5.9 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). 'The government must also offset expenditure incurred by the

deployment on Pakistan's border for 10 months. It can be done by keeping the defence budget below three percent of the GDP this year," one government official said. New Delhi spent millions of

dollars during a tense stand-off when the two nuclear-armed rivals between them posted a million troops along their border after India blamed an attack on the parliament here in December 2001 on Pakistan-based guerrillas.

India in the fiscal year 2002-2003 acked up its defence spending to 650 billion rupees (13.8 billion dollars), which marked an actual rise of 14 percent over revised military expenditure.

Powell presses China for support on Iraq, N Korea

#### AFP, Beijing

US Secretary of State Colin Powel opened meetings here Monday to lobby a reluctant China for support on a new UN resolution to compel Iraq to disarm and backing for the

US approach on North Korea. Powell, on the second leg of a three-nation tour of Asia that will

take him later Monday to South Korea, will face resistance from the Chinese who have adopted a cautious line on Iraq and have failed to exert their influence with North Korea in the crisis over its nuclear programs

As Washington ratchets up diplomatic pressure on UN Security Council members for the Iraq resolution expected to be presented on Tuesday, Powell met with Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan and

leader-in-waiting Hu Jintao ahead of talks with President Jiang Zemin. Hu and Powell both said the Tang meeting has been "very good" but

offered no details. Tang told Powell at the start of their meeting that China placed "great importance" on his visit. Asked if the talks would be easy, he said: "Diplomatic talks have never been easy.

The United States is looking for China -- a veto-wielding permanent member of the council -- to vote for the resolution or, at the very least, remain neutral by abstaining.

In Tokyo on Sunday Powell had stern words for Baghdad and the United Nations, which he said must act to force Iraq to comply with Security Council resolution 1441 that gave it a last chance to disarm.

## StanChart's donation for restoring sight

Standard Chartered Bank launched a programme to restore the sight of 28,000 people across the world -one for each of the bank's 28,000 employees. Standard Chartered's Group Chief Executive, Mervyn Davies, handed a cheque for US\$120,000 recently to Richard Porter, Executive Director of Sight Savers in London, says a press release.

The project is intended to restore people's sight in many of the markets where the bank operates and particularly in Bangladesh. The bank is working in partnership with Sight Savers International and the Islamia Eye Hospital in Dhaka, Bangladesh.



handing over a cheque for US \$ 120,000 to Executive Director of Sight Savers, Richard Porter, (L) in London in a recently taken picture.

## VHP vows to keep up move for temple construction

#### AFP, New Delhi

Angry Hindu hardliners, thwarted by police in their attempts to march on India's parliament Monday, vowed mass action campaigns until they realise their goal of building a temple on a disputed holy site in northern India.

A group of about 5,000 mendicants blocked by riot police when they assembled for the march in the Indian capital, vowed not to rest until they held the disputed land in the northern pilgrimage town of Ayodhya

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP or World Hindu Council)

warned Sunday that 10,000 of its members would march on parliament but early Monday police set up three tightly-guarded barricades on the proposed route, prompting the group instead to stage a sit-down protest.

"This is just a knock on the door of parliament, we will march another time if we want," one organiser told AFP

Senior VHP leader Praveen Togadia, addressing the saffronclad monks, warned of gathering "storm clouds" and urged the government to bypass parliament if the legislature refused to give permission for the building of the temple.