

To combat terrorism against Israel US to provide over \$100m to finance joint fight

JERUSALEM, Mar 14: US President Bill Clinton announced today that the United States would provide more than 100 million dollars to finance a joint US-Israeli fight against terrorism, reports AFP. He said an unprecedented meeting earlier today between US officials and the Israeli inner security cabinet decided to begin negotiations on drawing up a new bilateral security accord to battle terrorism and protect the Middle East peace process. "We have decided that the United States and Israel will immediately begin negotiations to conclude a bilateral agreement on combatting terrorism," he told a press conference during a 24-hour visit or organised after a wave of Islamic suicide bombings killed 61 people in Israel. "The United States will commit more than 100 million dollars to this effort," he said. "We are taking this step because I am determined that we must have every tool at our disposal for the fight against extremist violence," he said at the joint press conference with Peres. Clinton said he had already sent a request to Congress for a first installment of the assis-

stance. "I expect Congress to act quickly on this," he said. The US president said the new pact would strengthen the fight against political extremist violence in three ways: — By providing more high-tech US equipment to Israel, notably to detect explosives. — To jointly develop new "anti-terror methods and technologies." — To enhance communications and improve intelligence sharing between the two governments. — Secretary of State Warren Christopher and the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, John Deutch, would remain an additional day in Jerusalem to work out more specific aspects of the anti-terror agreement. Clinton's visit came a day after a 29-nation Middle East peace summit in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, pledged new support for the peace process and combatting terrorism. Reuter adds US President Bill Clinton, vowing to help Israeli troops crush Islamic militants, is to join a meeting of the country's security cabinet today during a Jewish state.

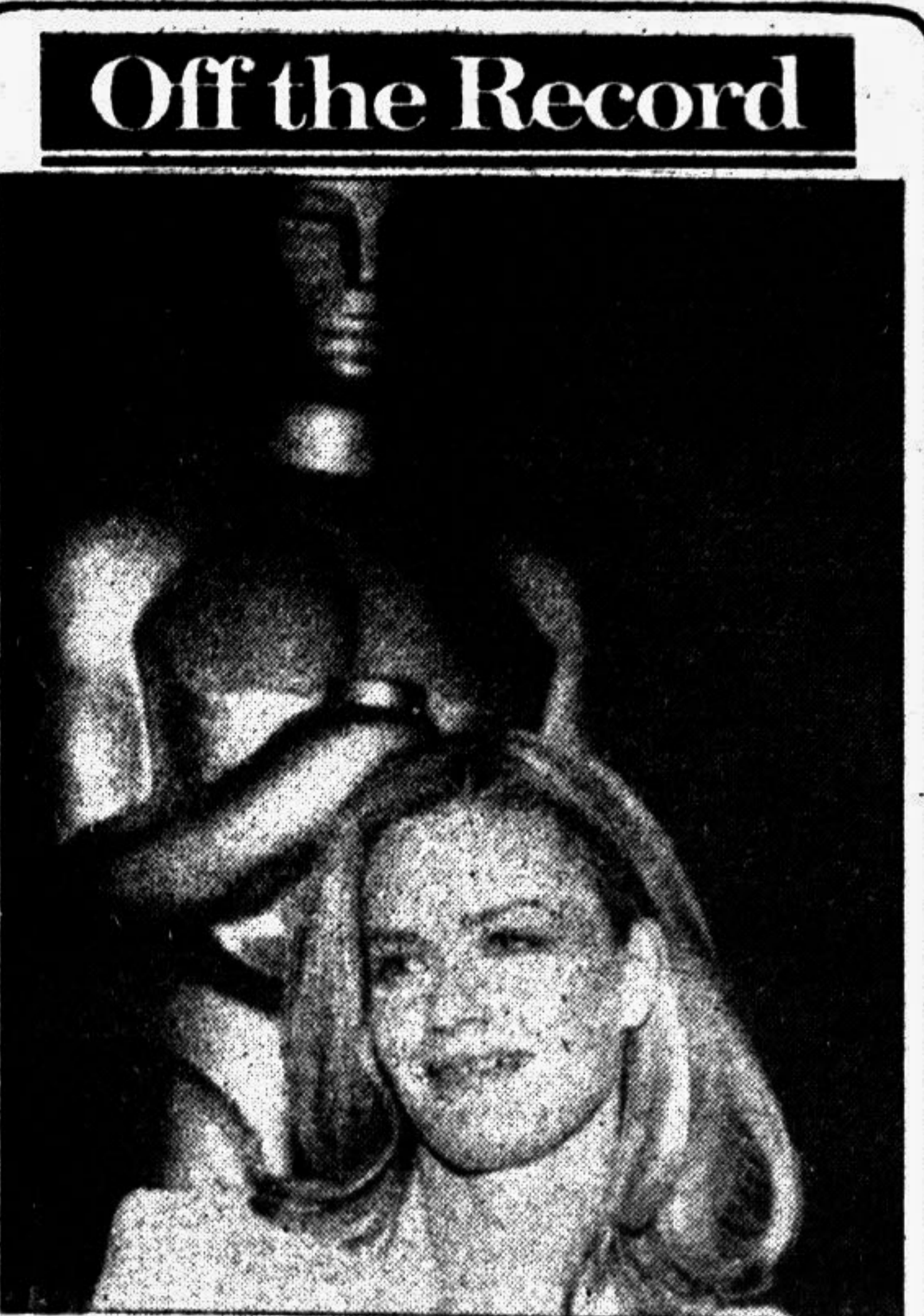
Washington accused of trying to establish 'hegemony' US House okays resolution to help defend Taiwan

WASHINGTON, Mar 14: A House of Representatives panel on Wednesday approved a resolution designed to make clear to China that the United States would resist aggression against Taiwan, reports Reuter. The resolution by the International Relations Subcommittee says the United States should supply Taiwan with defensive weapons and assist in defending it against invasion, missile attack or blockade. It now goes to the House International Relations Committee. The resolution, which does not require any action by the Clinton administration, was a response to Chinese sabre-rattling in the Taiwan Strait, where Beijing has test-fired missiles and staged war games. The administration has responded by dispatching two carriers to the area but critics have said its earlier stance towards Beijing was ambiguous. Rep Doug Bereuter, R-Nebraska, said the resolution was intended to make clear to Beijing that, consistent with the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act, the United States was committed to assist Taiwan if it was

attacked. But the said it was not designed to be anti-China. Bereuter said many were concerned that the administration's initial reaction of "calculated ambiguity" fell short of what was needed. He said the resolution could reach the full House next week. A similar resolution has been introduced in the Senate. Another report from Beijing says China's top generals have said the three-million-strong People's Liberation Army was committed to peace, the defence of the nation and protecting economic development, the Xinhua news agency said today. "China will neither invade any other country nor join in the arms race even when it lays claim to a greater national strength in the future," Xinhua quoted Liu Huangjing, vice chairman of the powerful Central Military Commission, as saying. China's efforts to increase its military capabilities and improve the army's combat efficiency were "purely for the sake of defence," Liu was quoted as telling a group dis-

ussion at the National People's Congress. He spoke as navy and air force units held a third day of live-ammunition war games in the narrow straits dividing the mainland from Taiwan. Chief of General Staff Fu Quanyou said stability was a prerequisite. "China needs not only political and social stability at home, but a peaceful international environment, especially a stable surrounding environment." The economy must come first, Xinhua quoted the general as saying. Meanwhile, an important pro-China newspaper accused the United States today of trying to establish military domination in the region by moving warships towards Taiwan in response to Chinese military exercises. The Daily Wen Wei Po said in a hawkish editorial that the US decision this week to move two aircraft carrier groups near Taiwan was a bid for "hegemony" in the Taiwan Strait. It also asked whether Washington had the courage of

a real fight. "Uncle Sam will never shoot aimlessly. The reason he sent carriers is to achieve hegemonic aims, inciting Taiwan's independence forces, controlling Taiwan and eventually splitting it from China's territory," the paper said. It said the move gave Taiwan independence advocates a push from behind into an abyss from which there would be no return. The US wanted to turn Taiwan into a protectorate and make the Pacific Ocean its own sea, the paper said. Taiwan President Lee Teng-Hui was to blame for the tension but the US was also partly responsible. "America should know that the more it backed Taiwan, the bolder Lee would become." "But are US politicians ready for a showdown with a China populated by 1.2 billion people? Does it really want wars in East Asia?" it asked. "Will US citizens really allow their sons to shed blood for the dream of a small number of independence advocates of Taiwan?"



US actress Elisabeth Shue arrives for the Oscar Nominees luncheon on Tuesday in Beverly Hills, Ca. Shue is nominated for best performance by an actress in a leading role for her part in the film "Leaving Las Vegas." The 68th Annual Academy Awards is March 25 in Los Angeles. — AFP/UNB photo

Her nickname is "fuel crisis"

LAGOS. A woman who had been waiting for over three hours for petrol gave birth outside a Nigerian filling station, the National News Agency reported on Wednesday, reports Reuter. The mother was in labour for 20 minutes on Tuesday before delivering a bouncing baby girl, nicknamed "fuel crisis" by a passer-by, who said: "That's why I am proud of African women, they can stand any situation they find themselves in." Motorists jammed the streets of Nigeria's commercial capital Lagos this week in the search for fuel as a petrol shortage hit Africa's largest oil exporter. The filling station owner, who helped deliver the baby, said she felt bad the mother went through such an ordeal.

Barking lady

BOSTON. An Irish setter named Lyric is the toast of Nashua, New Hampshire, after saving its owner's life on Tuesday by calling the 911 emergency number and barking for help to dispatchers, reports Reuter. Judi Bayly, who suffers from a sleep disorder complication by asthma, said she owed her life to her 8-year-old specially trained dog after she stopped breathing in her sleep when her oxygen mask became unplugged. Lyric, alerted by an alarm attached to Bayly's oxygen machine, tried to wake her. When that failed the dog ran to the telephone. Knocked the receiver off the hook and pressed a pre-programmed button that dialed 911. Lyric barked into the handset, activating automatic call tracing and flashing Bayly's address and medical history onto a dispatcher's computer screen. It also noted that Bayly had a trained medical dog to help her in emergencies.

Eight Lankan troops jailed for massacring 24 Tamils

COLOMBO, Mar 14: Eight soldiers were jailed by a court in northeastern Sri Lanka for allegedly massacring 24 Tamil civilians last month, a newspaper said Thursday, reports AP. Magistrate M A Selvarajah on Tuesday ordered the suspects remanded until magisterial proceedings into the case are completed, after witnesses picked them out of a police lineup of 93 soldiers in Muttur town, the report said. Earlier, a military inquiry recommended the trial of 14 soldiers for the February 11 massacre at Kumarapuram village in the eastern Trincomalee district. The victims included six women and 13 children. Police have recorded statements from 150 villagers, including 26 injured in the attack. Twenty-one civilians had told police that they could identify the suspects, the island newspaper said. The suspects could be tried by a military or a civilian court. If convicted they could face the death penalty. Earlier, the Defence Minis-

try blamed the killings on an "unknown group of armed persons." But President Chandrika Kumaratunga ordered the military inquiry after an outcry from Tamil lawmakers and human rights groups. Amnesty International, witnesses and Tamil lawmakers accused soldiers of the massacre in retaliation for an ambush by Tamil Tiger rebels that killed two of their comrades. The London-based human rights group said the victims included a 17-year-old girl who was raped by soldiers before being killed, 220 kilometers (140 miles) northeast of the capital, Colombo. Witnesses reported that soldiers "broke open the doors and windows of houses and fired gunshots at those inside," an Amnesty statement said. Tamil rebels have been fighting for a homeland in northern and eastern Sri Lanka for minority Tamils since 1983. They accuse the Sinhalese majority, which controls the government, and military, of discrimination against Tamils.



From L to R, Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, US President Bill Clinton, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, join their hands against "terrorism" during a family picture at the end anti-terrorism summit in Sharm el Sheikh on Wednesday. Twenty nine heads of states attended the meeting. — AFP/UNB photo

Iran vows to defy Saudi ban on rally during Hajj

TEHRAN, Mar 14: Iran has vowed that its pilgrims will defy a Saudi ban and hold a rally to denounce the United States and Israel at the Muslim Hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia in April, Tehran radio said today, reports Reuter. It quoted Iran's Hajj supervisor Mohammad Mohammadi Reyshahri as saying: "This year also, God favouring, this ceremony which is the foundation of Hajj will be held." Reyshahri was referring to the "disavowal of infidels" rally which Iran says should be held as part of the annual pilgrimage to denounce the enemies of Islam. "Hajj must answer the poisoned propaganda of world arrogance (West) against the Islamic revolution and all... clergyman and pilgrims are duty bound to take the message of the Islamic revolution to the people of the world," Reyshahri said. Saudi Arabia says Hajj is a purely religious affair and should not be politicised. It has banned all political activities during Hajj in past years.

Rao urges partymen to end frequent infighting

NEW DELHI, Mar 14: Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao said on Wednesday that his Congress Party looked poised to win general elections expected in May, but asked his party members to end their frequent infighting, reports Reuter. Rao, addressing Congress deputies a day after the parliament ended its last session before the polls, said: "The Congress is on the upswing and it will secure a majority in the coming parliamentary elections." Most analysts expect the polls to produce a hung parliament. A party statement said Rao made an impassioned appeal to the partymen to stop their infighting, an apparent

reference to a number of ministers and senior leaders who left the party during his five years in office. Some former ministers named in an unfolding 18 million dollar bribery scandal have accused Rao of betraying them amid reports that more members could leave the party before the polls. Rao said the party's election manifesto would be released in next two weeks. He stressed the government's economic reforms programme had brought substantial benefits to ordinary people but these had to be explained to the voters. There was no mention of the Hawala bribery scandal in Rao's speech, deputies said.

The prime minister has been named by a key witness in the affair as one of the recipients of laundered money. But Rao refused to answer opposition queries on Tuesday on whether he was under investigation in the scandal. He said the party would pick younger candidates in the elections. "Younger people in the age group of 40 to 55 years would get a larger share as young blood and new faces are the slogan of the day," he said. Rao faces a major challenge from the main opposition right-wing Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party and a left front-National Front Alliance of Communists, socialists and lower caste dandis.



A distressed child is helped out of the gates of Dunblane primary school on Wednesday, after a lone gunman burst into the school and shot and killed 16 children and one adult before shooting himself. — AFP/UNB photo

Attempt on Mubarak

Sudan fails to extradite suspects

UNITED NATIONS, Mar 14: Despite a Security Council request, Sudan has still not extradited three suspects wanted in an assassination attempt against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, the UN chief said in a report released Wednesday, reports AP. The Security Council in January called on Sudan to immediately extradite the men to Ethiopia and demanded that Sudan ended any support for terrorist groups. The Organisation of African Unity has made a similar request. Sudan claims the suspects, all Egyptians, are not in the country. Gunmen opened fire on Mubarak's car while he was visiting Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on June 26.



An US IFOR soldier makes his way on the top of an Abrams tank behind the barbed wire fence in the US fieldcamp nicknamed the Dawg-pound outside the town of Kalesija, on Wednesday. Some 14,000 US IFOR troops are currently in north eastern Bosnia as part of the Task Force Eagle. They are patrolling the zone of separation and monitoring freedom of movement and other parts of the Dayton agreement. — AFP/UNB photo

BRIEFLY

Ex-MP arrested in Thailand:

The Thai criminal court has ordered to arrest a former Member of Parliament for failing to show up to hear a court verdict on him, Xinhua reports from Bangkok. Seksan Saenphum, ex-member of Parliament from the chart Thai (Thai Nation) Party, was in contravention of a court order as he failed to appear to hear the appeal court ruling on him.

Russia to build floating N-plant:

Russia is developing a floating nuclear power plant and plans to put one into operation in the Far East in five years, the director of an energy company said Wednesday, AP reports from Moscow. The plant will consist of two small reactors aboard a barge in the East Siberian Sea, head of the Malaya Energetika company Alexander Polushkin told the Itar-Tass news agency.

Oldest Brazilian slave dies:

One of the two oldest Brazilian slaves died on Tuesday just two months before her 126th birthday local press reported Wednesday, Xinhua reports from Brasilia. Elzaria Damiana Fonseca, died after a short illness at the old people's home she had been living in for the last 40 years in Jiundai just outside Sao Paulo.

Burundi seeks help to destroy arms:

Burundi's president on Wednesday tried to drum up international support for cutting off arms to Burundi, where ethnic violence has claimed for than 100,000 lives, AP reports from Rome. President Sylvestre Ntibantungany suggested that the United Nations help identify those countries selling arms to Burundi. "Arms aren't made in Burundi, nor in Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda or Zaire," Ntibantungany told reporters during a visit at St Egidio, a Catholic group that has helped broker peace in Mozambique.

Protest march in Turkey:

Demonstrators protesting deadly clashes between members of the country's Alawite community and police fought with officers in two suburbs on Wednesday, AP reports from Istanbul. The protests took place in the low-income districts of Maltepe and Alibeykoy, where a few dozen protesters raised barricades, burned tires and shouted leftist slogans blaming the police for last year's killings.

Mahathir to visit Australia:

Prime Minister John Howard announced on Thursday that he will hold informal talks later this month with Malaysia's prime minister, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, AP reports from Canberra. Mahathir has not visited Australia since 1983, and had long feuded with former prime minister Paul Keating, who was defeated by Howard in Australia's March 2 national election.

HR situation in Rwanda takes worrying turn

GENEVA, Mar 14: With the legacy of the 1994 genocide still haunting Rwanda, the human rights situation in the African nation has taken a worrying turn for the worse, according to a new UN report, reports AP. Arrests, murders and intimidation increased in late 1995, according to the report by special investigator Rene Degni-Segui. He accused the Tutsi-led government of most of the abuses and urged more international help to rebuild the judicial and social system shattered by the 1994 ethnic turmoil that killed an estimated 500,000 people, mainly Tutsis. The report will be presented next week to the UN Human Rights Commission, which opens its annual session next week. Manzi Bakuramutsa, Rwanda's ambassador to the United Nations in New York, said Wednesday that the Rwandan government is doing its best to minimise human rights violations. But, he added, "Rwanda is a very poor country that has known destruction and you can't expect things to be perfect." Degni-Segui, a law professor from the Ivory Coast, also reported there was no evidence to confirm allegations by the ousted government that Tutsi authorities have killed more than 300,000 Hutus to avenge

the 1994 slaughter. Sporadic massacres continued, he said, but charges of coordinated reprisals against returning Hutu refugees were unsubstantiated. Degni-Segui blamed killings by the government armed forces for 51 murders and summary executions in October 1995 and 63 in November, 1995. The report also criticised prison conditions, saying Kigali prisons house 10,000 inmates in space meant for 2,000. There are about 61,200 prisoners total — up from about 46,000 in May 1995 — including 1,711 children accused of participating in the massacres, Degni-Segui said.

After stabilising in early 1995, arrests in Rwanda increased from about 550 per week in October to between 800 and 1,200 per week now, he said. Few are ever charged, he said, and new forms of prisoner abuse have appeared. These include necklacing, rape, denying food or medical treatment and detention in the "amigos" — the most unwholesome, darkest and most sinister places where the prisoners are heaped one on top of another. Bakuramutsa "lamented" that "conditions are terrible in prisons, but said the government was trying to rebuild its shattered judicial system and wanted human rights mo-

niters to stay in the country. Other UN findings include: Increased intimidation and censorship of journalists and other professionals who speak out against the government. Roman Catholic priests, accused by the Tutsi government of collaborating with the disgraced Hutu regime, are threatened, arrested and occasionally murdered. Women and children suffered most from the aftermath of the ethnic bloodshed. An estimated 47,000 children were orphaned and 250,000 to 300,000 women were raped or forced to have sex with a relative. Some 2,000 to 5,000 children born as a result of the rapes are outcasts.

Transplants can cure some forms of liver cancer

BOSTON, Mar 14: Transplants can often cure some forms of liver cancer if the disease is caught early, a study concludes, reports AP. The study involved patients with liver cancer that developed from cirrhosis. Chronic infection with the hepatitis B or C viruses can cause cirrhosis of the liver, which in turn can cause cancer. Although doctors have tried to cure both disease at once with liver transplants, the results have often been disappointing. Survival after five years has ranged from 30 per cent to 40 per cent.

182 journalists jailed in 22 countries last year

WASHINGTON, Mar 14: A record 182 journalists were jailed last year in 22 countries, an increase blamed on crackdowns on the press in Nigeria and Ethiopia, a report said today, says AP. Turkey and Ethiopia topped the list but China, Vietnam, and Myanmar also held a large number of journalists last year, according to the US-based committee to protect journalists. The worldwide total in 1995 eclipsed the previous record set in 1994 — 173 at year's end, the report said. The New York-based group reported the increase was mainly attributable "to the recent crackdown on independence journalism in Ethiopia and Nigeria." "For the second consecutive year, Turkey held more journalists in jail (51) than any other country as the government continued to suppress independent reporting on the Kurdish conflict," the report said. The four countries with the highest number of imprisoned journalists were: Turkey at 51, Ethiopia at 31, China at 20, and Kuwait at 18, the group reported. Vietnam, Peru, Myanmar and Nigeria each held eight.