

International

### China won't renounce use of force to reclaim Taiwan

WASHINGTON, Dec 11: In a blunt speech to US military officers, Chinese Defence Minister Chi Haotian said on Tuesday that China refuses to renounce the use of force to reclaim Taiwan, which Beijing considers a rogue province, reports Reuters.

"We hope to see a peaceful settlement, yet we refuse to renounce the use of force," the visiting minister told officers at the military's National Defence University. He said the Beijing government would not sit idly by and allow Taiwan's leaders to "connive" to split China.

Chi's policy statement was not new, but his comments on a visit to improve US-China relations emphasised the importance that communist China gives to reclaiming democratic Taiwan.

The United States, under the 1972 Shanghai communique,

recognises Beijing as the sole government of China, but maintains unofficial relations with Taiwan and continues to sell arms to the island located off China.

Chi urged Washington, which earlier this year dispatched two aircraft carriers to the region and accused China of trying to influence Taiwan's presidential elections with a show of military force in the Taiwan Strait, to let Beijing and Taipei settle their differences without interference.

"The Taiwan authorities have in disregard of the overall interests of the Chinese nation, gone further and further down the road of conniving at, and participating in, activities aimed at splitting the motherland, which cause tensions in cross-strait relations," Chi said.

## Bangladesh condemns Israeli formula of security for peace

Bangladesh on Tuesday strongly condemned the attitude of the Israeli government to replace the agreed principle of "land for peace" by a formula of "security for peace" that threatened the peace process, reports BSS.

In a statement at the General Assembly of the United Nations, Ambassador Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, said that the recent decision by Israeli government to start confiscation of land again with a view to expanding the 'illegal settlements' in the occupied territories posed a new threat to the Middle East peace process.

This would have a negative impact on the prospect of the right on self determination by the Palestinian people leading to the eventual establishment of an independent Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital, he added.

Ambassador Chowdhury said that withdrawal of Israeli troops from all occupied territories, release of Palestinian and Arab prisoners, allowing the Palestinian authority to exercise control over their own lands and resources, immediate dismantling of settlements in occupied territories and establishing a better relationship with Israel with all its neighbours,

including Palestine, could create a solid foundation for lasting peace in the Middle East.

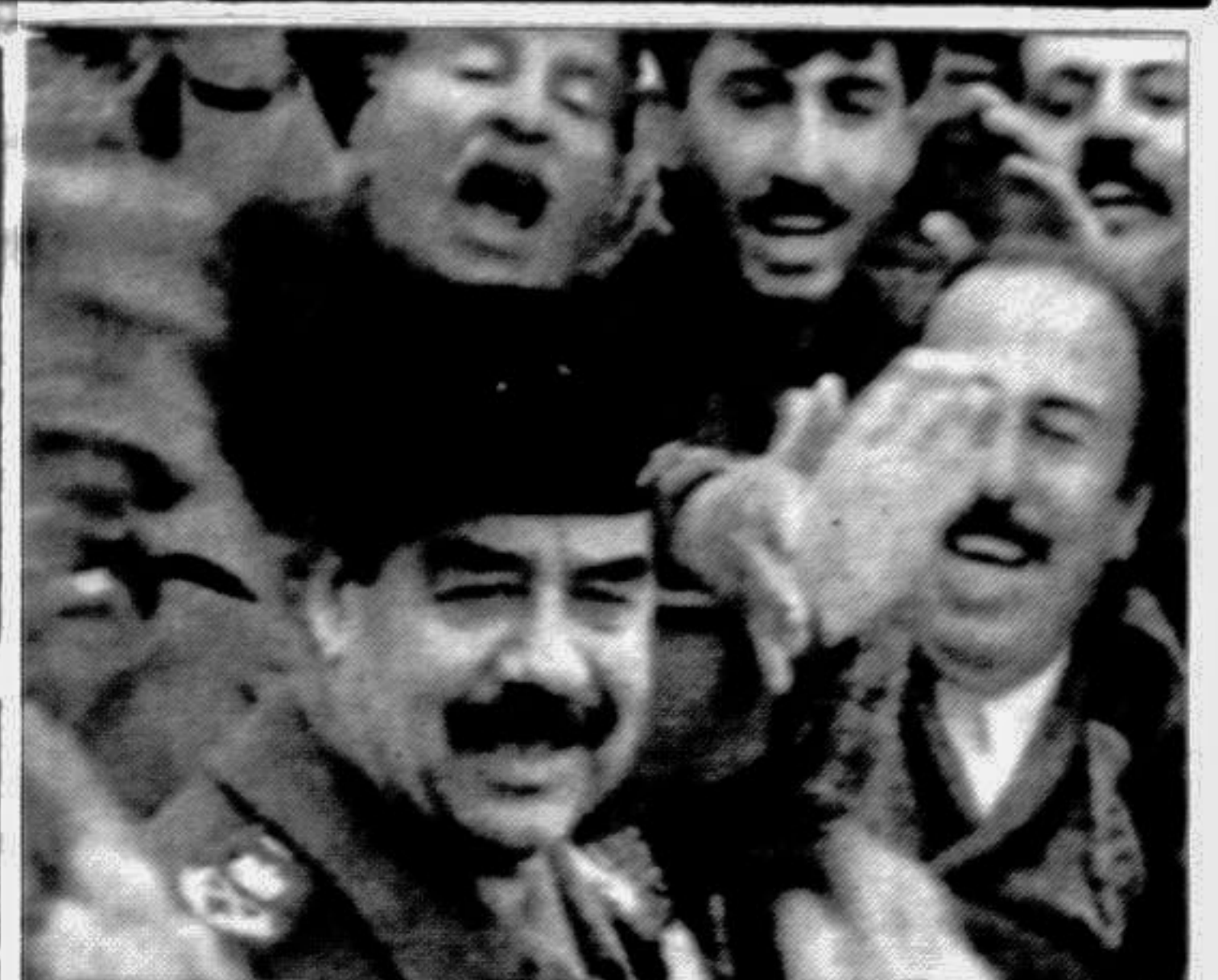
In this regard, Bangladesh envisaged a more healthy role of the United Nations in the peace process, the permanent representative added.

In the statement, Bangladesh called upon Israel to desist from changing demographic and legal structure of the occupied Syrian Golan plateau and to take initiative to end its occupation of all occupied Palestinian and Arab lands including the Golan.

Bangladesh also reiterated its call for implementation of all relevant Security Council

resolutions related to withdrawal of Israeli troops from southern Lebanon.

In the statement, Bangladesh also expressed her satisfaction at the recent signing of a memorandum of understanding for allowing Iraq to export limited amount of oil for importing food items and hoped that ongoing cooperation of Iraq with the international community in fulfilling its obligations under various Security Council resolutions would facilitate eventual withdrawal of UN sanctions against Iraq as those had a negative impact on the vulnerable segments of the Iraqi society.



Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is surrounded by supporters, in Kirkuk Tuesday. Turkish officials later declared a power failure delayed the start of Iraq's first crude export in six years. — AFP/UNB photo

### 3 more ASEAN members likely next year

TOKYO, Dec 11: The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) will "very likely" grant membership to Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia next year, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said in an interview with a Japanese newspaper published today, reports AFP.

"It is very likely it will come next year," Mahathir said in an interview with the Yomiuri Shimbun and the English language Yomiuri Daily when asked when ASEAN would be expanded to include the three nations.

Mahathir, whose country will assume the chairmanship of the seven nation regional grouping in 1997 on its 30th anniversary, also said he would like to invite the leaders of Japan, South Korea and China to an informal ASEAN summit likely to be held at the end of next year, the newspapers said.

ASEAN groups Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Its leaders agreed at a meeting in Jakarta on November 30 to extend membership to Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia simultaneously, but stopped short of setting a date due to

conflict over the timing of Myanmar's admission.

Mahathir told the daily the size of the demonstrations had not dampened his support for Myanmar's admission to ASEAN.

"For instance, we see other countries worse than Myanmar accepted to the United Nations," he said.

### Mother Teresa may be released before Christmas

CALCUTTA, Dec 11: Mother Teresa slept well after a busy day of work and therapy that included 20 minutes of walking, doctors said Wednesday, reports AP.

Despite a slight setback over the weekend, Mother Teresa has been increasingly active in recent days. Doctors say she is likely to be released before Christmas, nearly a month after she was hospitalised with a mild heart attack.

Tuesday, she walked in stages for a total of 20 minutes in the intensive therapy unit, leaning only occasionally on an attendant.

## Kofi Annan seems well-placed to undertake serious UN reforms

From Hasan Ferdous

NEW YORK, Dec 11: Kofi Annan of Ghana, who obtained the required votes for the top UN post is a career UN official currently serving as Under-Secretary-General for peace-keeping operations.

He appeared to meet two crucial preconditions: one set by the Americans, and the other by the French.

The US had indicated that it would prefer to see the next Secretary-General in the role of an administrator, not a world leader. The French, on the other hand, had insisted that whoever gets the top UN job, must speak French.

President Chirac said the next UN Secretary-General must be fluent in both English and French, which are the two working languages of the Organization. Chirac said France would veto Salim Ahmed Salim of Tanzania, the current Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, as he speaks very little French.

This was disclosed Sunday by President Nelson Mandela of South Africa. Mandela felt

Salim, whose name was not on the ballot, could make a "great Secretary-General."

Most observers think Annan is more familiar with the system and thus well placed to undertake serious structural reforms of the UN something the Americans consider very important. He is also fluent in French.

The other candidates considered in yesterday's balloting were Ahmedou Ould Abdallah of Mauritania, former UN special representative for Burundi and now a co-chairman of the Global Coalition for Africa Group in Washington, Hamid Algabid of Niger, the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and Amara Essay of Ivory Coast currently foreign minister of his country and a former President of the UN General Assembly.

There is no written rule saying that the UN Secretary-General must be elected from a particular region or serve for two terms. However, as it has happened over the past 25

years, the post is now rotated among various regional groups, with each Secretary-General serving for two consecutive terms. For example, U Thant of Burma (1961-1971) was followed by Kurt Waldheim (1972-1981), a Western European. He was succeeded by Javier Perez de Cuellar (1982-1991) of Peru, a South America. In 1992, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali became the first African to become the UN Secretary-General.

No one expects the tussle over the top UN job to be over after Tuesday's informal voting. Many observers at the UN think that France, which was angered at the US veto of Boutros-Ghali, may play its veto card against any US sponsored candidate.

Just to avoid such an occurrence, Washington has maintained clear distance from any of the four contenders. Most countries would, however, like to avoid a drawn out battle between the super powers, which could further divide the Organization and weaken its world standing.

In 1991, China and USA fought the longest veto battle over the post of the Secretary-General. China supported Salim Ahmed Salim, who is still remembered for his open jubilation after Beijing gained Taiwan's seat at the United Nations in 1971. Washington vetoed his candidacy 18 times. China, in its turn, blocked the election of Kurt Waldheim for a third term by vetoing 15 times. The deadlock was finally broken when Javier Perez de Cuellar, a UN Under-Secretary-General, was chosen as a compromise candidate.

"Nothing like 1991 will occur again," a senior US diplomat has said. Most observers think most countries would try to avoid any further damage to the world body. The current President of the General Assembly, Razali Ismail of Malaysia, has said he would like to have the election process concluded before December 17, when the General Assembly goes into recess. The New Secretary-General will take up his job beginning next year.

## BRIEFLY

### 6.1m US children living in poverty:

Some 6.1 million American children under 6 were living in poverty in 1994, and many were eligible for health care under the federal Medicaid programme but didn't enroll, say two new studies of child poverty, AP reports from Washington.

An additional 4.8 million young children lived near the poverty line, said Columbia University's National Centre for Children in Poverty. The US Census Bureau reported in September that the childhood poverty rate had declined slightly — less than a percentage point — in 1995 from the year before. Tuesday's reports used older data.

### Kornblum to visit Bosnia:

US Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs John Kornblum will travel to Bosnia Friday, the State Department said Tuesday, reports AP from Washington.

Kornblum will travel to Mostar, then to Sarajevo, where he will meet with the Bosnian presidency to review the status of building the joint institutions of the Bosnian government," spokesman Glyn Davies said. The city of Mostar, in southern Bosnia-Herzegovina, is divided into two sectors: a western one held by Croats and an eastern one controlled by Muslims.

### Suriname becomes 54th OIC member

### Malaysia calls for isolating Israeli govt

JAKARTA, Dec 11: Criticism of Israel at a meeting of the world's Muslim governments intensified Wednesday with a Malaysian appeal to isolate the Israeli government until it makes progress on agreements for Palestinian self-rule, reports AP.

Foreign Minister Abdullah Badawi, speaking at a meeting of the 54-nation Organisation of the Islamic Conference, complained that Israel was suffering no consequences for delaying its pullout from Hebron, the last West Bank city occupied by Israeli soldiers.

Talks on the pullout, which was to have happened last March, have stalled because of Israeli concerns about security for 500 Jewish settlers who live

among the town's 130,000 Palestinians.

"This is not because Israel is invincible, but that we are weak because of the disarray among us," Badawi said in a speech.

"Indeed, as long as the Palestinian problem remains unresolved, it is the policy of Malaysia not to have any relations with Israel. To this end, we urge OIC member states to do likewise," he said.

Malaysia has never had diplomatic ties with Israel, but Jordan, Morocco and other OIC members have been begun forming relations, ending decades of hostilities with the Israelis.

Criticism of Israel has been a common theme at the otherwise low-key annual meeting of foreign ministers from Muslim governments representing some 1.5 billion people across Europe, Africa and Asia.

### 38 killed as Tigers attack army camp

COLOMBO, Dec 11: At least 38 men were killed and another 37 wounded when Tamil Tiger guerrillas attacked a military camp in Eastern Sri Lanka today, official sources here said reports AP.

The separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) mounted the pre-dawn assault against the Pulkunawa camp where elite Special Task Force (STF) commandos and army units were based, officials said.

### Jayalalitha's assets astound Gowda

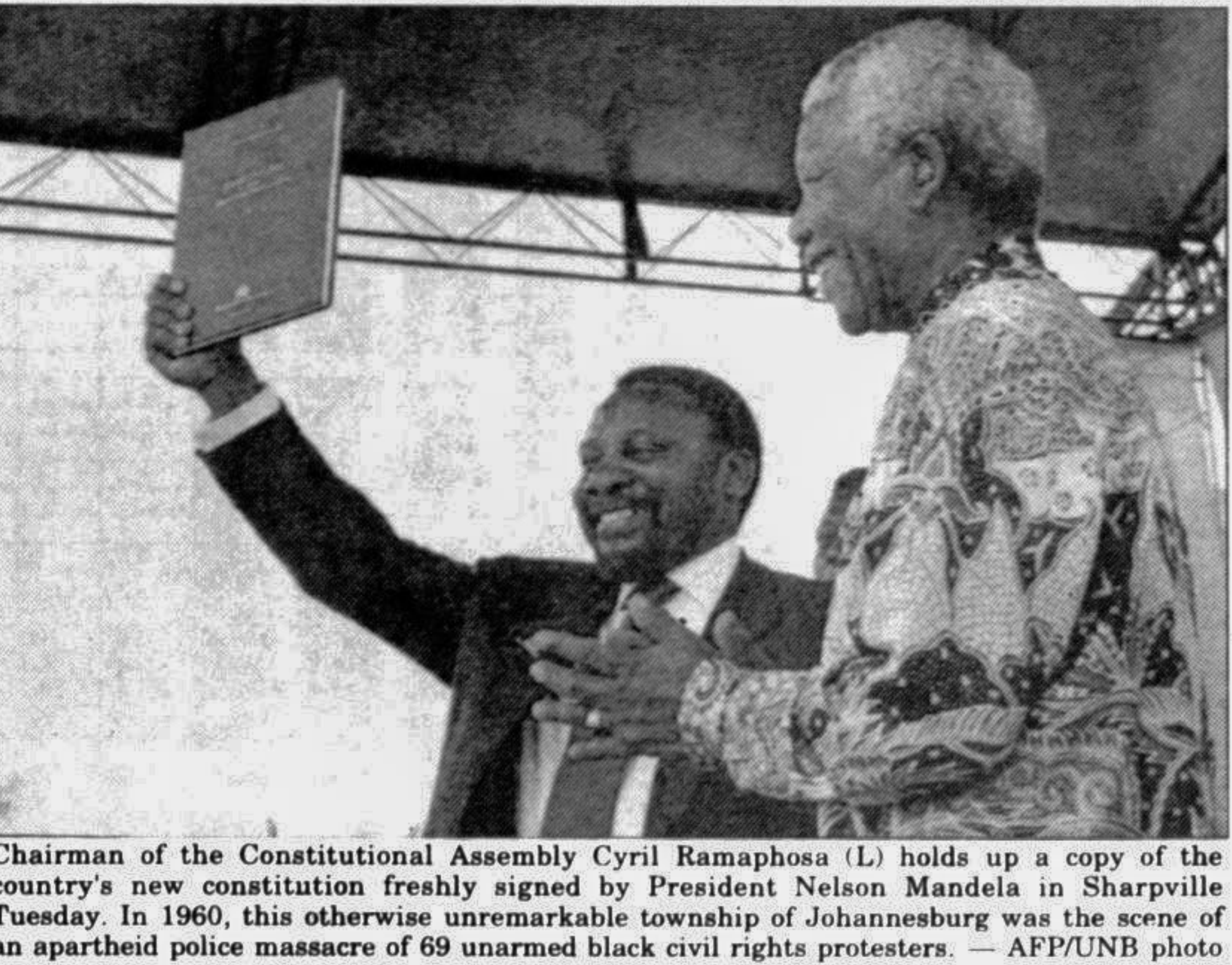
MADRAS, Dec 11: Indian Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda said he was astounded by the hoard of gold and silver, totalling millions of dollars, seized from the home of an actress-turned-politician in southern India, reports AP.

Deve Gowda told reporters here late Tuesday he was "shocked and surprised" that documents and assets worth several million rupees were uncovered in a raid on "Just one of the houses" of Jayalalitha Jayaram, former chief minister of Tamil Nadu state.

Jayaram dubbed by critics as India's Imelda Marcos because of her lavish lifestyle, was arrested in the state capital Madras on Saturday following allegations she embezzled 2.4 million dollars.

Her detention led to protests by her supporters across the coastal state.

The raid revealed 16.5 million dollars of goods including more than 30 kilograms of gold and diamonds 400 diamond bangles, 40 silver plates weighing 750 kilograms 100 diamond studded watches and a giant golden sword.



Chairman of the Constitutional Assembly Cyril Ramaphosa (L) holds up a copy of the country's new constitution freshly signed by President Nelson Mandela in Sharpville Tuesday. In 1960, this otherwise unremarkable township of Johannesburg was the scene of an apartheid police massacre of 69 unarmed black civil rights protesters. — AFP/UNB photo

### French cops nab 15 suspected Muslim rebels

PARIS, Dec 11: French police swooped on suspected Muslim militants on Tuesday, rounding up 15 people in dawn raids across Paris a week after the bombing of a city train which killed four people, reports Reuters.

Police and counter-espionage officers searched buildings housing Muslims in Paris and the suburbs on orders from anti-terrorism magistrates who are investigating 1995 bombings by Algerian Muslim extremists that killed eight people and injured more than 160.

Police said the swoops were not directly linked to last Tuesday's attack at the capital's port railway station which bore the hallmarks of Algerian Muslim extremists.

## Off the Record



Madonna turns in her chair during the Director's Guild of America screening of her new movie "Evita" for the international press on the Tuesday. Madonna's new movie is based on the life of Eva Peron, former first lady of Argentina. — AFP/UNB photo

### Boy scouts adopt gay policy

SAN FRANCISCO: Boy scouts officials in the San Francisco area have quietly adopted a gay policy that is more lenient than the organisation's national guidelines, reports AP.

Homosexual members or leaders are opposed by the national Boy Scouts organisation, and it has allowed gays to be expelled.

"The policy of the Bay Area Council of the Boy Scouts does not call for expulsion unless the Scout or leader engages in public homosexual conduct or advocacy."

The new policy attempts to better define "gray areas" in the national policy, said Steve Barnes, a former military man who took over last year as chief executive officer of the local council.

"This is a very difficult issue," Barnes said. "What we've done is define where and when we'd take action... If you come into our programme and you are interested in conduct or advocacy, then will not retain you."

National Boy Scouts guidelines require would-be leaders to submit to investigations including criminal background checks, Barnes said.

The revised Bay Area guidelines forbid Scout officials from investigating a member's or a leader's sexual orientation.

The Boy Scouts of America does not ask prospective members about their sexual preference, nor do we check on the sexual orientation of boys who are already in scouting," the local council's policy says.

The Boy Scouts of America has always taught youth the traditional values of scouting families. Accordingly, we do not allow for the registration of members or leaders whose public conduct or advocacy does not suggest these traditional values, the policy says.

### Van Gogh's painting fails to fetch again

PARIS: Expensive fake or masterpiece, a controversial landscape possibly painted by Vincent Van Gogh failed to fetch its 32 million franc (dfrs 6.4 million) asking price Tuesday evening, reports AP.

The "Jardin d'Auvers," praised by most scholars as the real thing but doubted by a single critic, failed for the second time in four years to make it off the auction block.

Critic Jean-Marie Tasset last summer produced research showing that "Jardin" once belonged to the brother of a known copier of Van Gogh's works.

The world's leading Van Gogh scholars insist — repeatedly — that Van Gogh made the small landscape in the creative frenzy leading up to his suicide in 1890.

But the asking price seemed too much for the slightly questionable landscape.

Jacques Tajan, the French auctioneer handling the sale at the Hotel Georges V, said he hoped the government would step in and buy the painting and display it in a museum.

"It would seem to me a good thing for France," he said.

## UN, world should rethink approach to peacemaking, peacekeeping

OSLO, Dec 11: It is time for the United Nations and the world to rethink their approach to peacemaking and peacekeeping. The question today is how the world can deal more effectively with emerging dangerous situations among and within states.

The UN charter was designed to deal with conflicts between states. The collective security system, originally envisioned in the charter of the UN, was virtually immobilised by the cold war and never used as intended. Instead came the unwritten practice of peace-keeping operations.

When a situation arises for which the charter prescribes a procedure, there is a strong moral obligation for countries to heed a call for resources, peacekeepers and other assistance. But by the time the peacekeepers are ready to go, it

interference is an established norm of relations between states but to often, allied with the perceived notion of sovereignty is used to cover up striking because of human rights.

Second, the information base is often too weak. The UN itself is ill equipped to gather information about emerging dangerous situations. If the United Nations had access to the information that many member states possess, we would have the opportunity to get active as an organization at an earlier stage.

Third, failing a compelling obligation under the charter, states too often seem to feel relatively free to choose not to get engaged in a situation that is not visibly dangerous, or does not offer spectacular pictures, is all too often left out of the news. And since those who suffer have

no vote in the countries that command the resources to help, it may be all too convenient to look the other way.

In addition, every developed country has its own unmet needs and strained national budgets and people of influence who actually don't care if scores of Hutus are slain or if the Balkans go up in flames.

What is at stake if we fail to grasp the challenges from this news category of inter state conflict is in fact the whole system of peaceful relations even world peace.

This is difficult point to make people understand CNN and its sisters and brothers in the media are very adept at bringing out the most spectacular coverage of conflict, but we cannot allow state action to be dependent on television's ability to build an emotional national support base.

Competition for world attention is intense and rallying attention around an emerging crisis situation will be a constant up hill battle. But there is no other alternative, unless we are ready to accept scores of deadly conflicts around the world, which would run against everything that human values, democracy and open society stand for.

There is a huge educational task to prepare us for a world order where we effectively dampen the first flicker of conflict, but the rewards would be immense, and while the educational task is for all countries to embark upon together, the UN must develop the institutional, legal and managerial capacity as a model also for regional action.

The UN is still the focal point of multilateralism. We need a continuous focus on the

## General accuses Suu Kyi of inciting protests

YANGON, Dec 11: Myanmar's top general branded an ongoing wave of student protests as the work of political infiltrators and colonialist lackeys in the first official government reaction to the recent unrest in Wednesday's state-run media, reports AP.

Senior General Than Shwe, the most powerful member of Myanmar military junta, made the charges during a speech to the Union Solidarity and Development Association, a military-sponsored social organization that democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi has compared to the Hitler Youth.

Yangon has been rocked in recent days by students demonstrating against police brutality, and demanding the right to form a students union and more freedom and human rights.

The unrest is the most serious show of civil dissent since the nationwide democracy uprising of 1988. Schools have been closed in Rangoon and Mandalay, and heavy police and army presence in the capital kept protests small and isolated on Tuesday.

"All must keep vigil and prevent negative, destructive and subversive traitors from intruding into the education realm and using students in bids to gain political power," read the front page headline on Wednesday's state-run New Light of Myanmar.