

## International

# Indonesia must address increasing violence in E Timor: Albright

JAKARTA, Mar 5: US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright told Indonesian leaders Friday that she was encouraged by the nation's burgeoning democracy, but she also said they must "urgently and boldly" address growing violence in East Timor and social unrest, reports AP.

This is a pivotal moment in the history of one of the world's great nations," Albright said at a news conference with Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas. "Events here in Indonesia over the next year, especially over the next few months, will go far to determine the extent of democracy, the pace of recovery and the prospects for social tranquillity for this country and, by extension, of all of southeast Asia."

Albright said she was encouraged by preparations for Indonesia's June 7 parliamentary elections. The voting will lead to selection of a new president by a special assembly, determining the fate of the nation experimenting with democracy since the ouster of President

Suharto last May. After meeting Friday with President BJ Habibie, Albright said he understands the need for international monitors to assure the voting goes smoothly.

"He is obviously devoted to having this happen — a free, fair and open election," she said.

Albright also met with Defense Minister Gen. Wiranto before ending a week-long Asia trip.

Demonstrating US support for all groups participating in elections, Albright was meeting separately with leading members of opposition groups as well, including Gus Dur, Amien Rais and Megawati Sukarnoputri, the daughter of the late Sukarno, Indonesia's first president after independence from the Dutch.

Alatas told Albright the government is seeking a peaceful solution in East Timor, where separatists and those seeking autonomy have clashed since Habibie offered to grant the territory independence if the majority of its 850,000 people re-

ject a self-rule plan. Indonesia has not yet determined how to gauge public opinion on the plan. It rejected the idea of a referendum, saying it could lead to increased violence and would be difficult to conduct quickly.

"It is necessary to stop military until it can be proven that (Indonesia's military) is committed with the Indonesian government to stop the problems in East Timor," Gusmao said Thursday in an interview with The Associated Press. "We are afraid of new attempts to divide the East Timorese people."

Alatas told Albright the Indonesian government has been training "auxiliary guards" to help police, who don't have enough forces to handle riots and demonstrations. But most of those guards are unarmed or carry only wooden sticks, he said.

"Why should we want a situation that is uncontrollable in East Timor?" he asked.

Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1975 and annexed it in 1976. Years of human rights abuses and guerrilla warfare followed, but Jakarta began easing its policy toward the region after Suharto's ouster.

dependence militia groups in East Timor — a charge Alatas told Albright was "totally unfounded."

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Killing of opponents

Jyoti Basu  
declines to  
comment

CALCUTTA, Mar 5: West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu today declined to comment on the centre's decision to examine the Trinamool Congress' charges of "large scale" killings of political opponents by the CPI (M) in the State, reports PTI.

"I have nothing to say," an angry Basu retorted when asked by newsmen for his comment on the union home minister L K Advani's instruction to the union Home Secretary to examine Mamata Banerjee's charges.

"This is a barbaric and uncivilised government," the chief minister added.

Advani's instruction followed the Trinamool Congress leader Mamata Banerjee's meeting with him in Delhi on Wednesday where she briefed him about law and order situation in the state. Banerjee also submitted a list of her party activists killed by CPI (M) since last year's Panchayat elections.

## US govt urged to recognise China, not Pakistan as India's adversary

WASHINGTON, Mar 5: A senior US congressman has asked the Clinton administration to recognise China, and not Pakistan, as India's chief adversary, and said the Indo-Pak bus diplomacy was an effort pregnant with promise of possible rapprochement between the two neighbours, reports AFP.

"I believe the time has come for us to closely examine our basic premise in policy-making toward South Asia, especially toward India," Senator Gary Ackerman said on Wednesday, claiming he reached the conclusion about the China-threat through talks with Indian leaders.

Pakistan does not worry the Indian leadership as much as China does. Beijing still occupies a large chunk of Indian territory and it is a nuclear power of course. In a bid to maintain the charade of diplomatic nicety, Indian leaders shy away from publicly identifying China as its main military threat, he said.

On the need for a shift in US policy toward India, he said, "no amount of attention from US in the US is too much attention

or too much effort or too complicated a task when it comes to dealing with one of the world's great civilizations, one of the most important markets in the world, one of the richest reservoirs of highly talented and skilled human resources in the globe.

For the past 50 years, our relationship with India has been governed more by mistrust than by trust. This is a sad but blunt conclusion one comes to if one weighs dispassionately all the ups and downs in our again, off-again relationship.

I believe that the time has come to change the course of our mutual relations. This phenomenon of "trust deficiency" syndrome, if I may call it so, must be overcome by both nations, for, absent trust, any relationship between two great nations, especially vibrant democracies such as ours, will end up being built on rather shaky foundations, he said.

"It is no longer acceptable to say the abuse of women and men is cultural, it should be called what it is: criminal," the First Lady said.

Shevardnadze  
slates Yeltsin's  
firing of CIS  
chief

TOKYO, Mar 5: Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze expressed displeasure Friday with Russian leader Boris Yeltsin's failure to inform him of plans to fire the controversial head of an alliance of former Soviet republics, reports AP.

Shevardnadze, speaking to reporters Friday during a five-day visit to Japan, also welcomed Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi's pledge to boost financial assistance to Georgia and strengthen bilateral economic ties.

On Thursday, Russian President Yeltsin reportedly dismissed business tycoon Boris Berezovsky as executive secretary of the Commonwealth of Independent States, an unruly alliance of 12 former Soviet republics.

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