

## International

'Signing of CTBT now not so easy'

# Sonia misled the president, Vajpayee says



Workers put the finishing touch to sign on the Carlton Hotel facade on Tuesday on the Cannes croisette. The festival will kick into high gear on Wednesday as movie stars, journalists, cinephiles and curious converge on the French Riviera for the world's premier cinematic event.

— AFP photo

**UNSC calls for ceasefire in Congo:**

As the Congolese government stepped up its nine-month war against rebels, the Security Council called a new for the warring parties to agree to a ceasefire, AP says from UN.

Also Tuesday, the council asked the rebels and the government of President Laurent Kabila and his allies to "demonstrate an attitude of responsibility and a greater willingness to cooperate," with peace initiatives.

**Sharif in Spore:** Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif will arrive in Singapore today for a three-day official visit, the Singapore Foreign Ministry said Tuesday, Xinhua says from Singapore.

During his visit, Sharif will meet Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong for talks on bilateral and regional issues. Sharif will also meet Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew, Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and call on Singapore President Ong Teng Cheong.

**Jeep collision kills 6 in India:** Six persons of a marriage party including four women were killed and 21 injured when an overcrowded jeep collided with a tipper, near Bramhapuri, about 125 kms from here yesterday, police said. PTI reports from Nagpur.

The driver of the jeep was among the deceased. The injured including six boys and four girls were rushed to a hospital at Chandrapur.

**Hillary visits Ireland:** US First Lady Hillary Clinton returned to Ireland early yesterday for a two-day visit on both sides of the border aimed at demonstrating continued American support for the peace process. AFP reports from Shannon.

The US first lady embarked on her fourth visit to the country amid tight security at Shannon airport, County Clare, in the west of the country.

**Chris Patten to be EU Commissioner:** Britain's Labour government is to choose the former governor of Hong Kong, pro-European Conservative Chris Patten, as a European commissioner to replace Sir Leon Brittan, the Financial Times said Wednesday. AFP says from London.

Citing ministerial sources, the paper said the decision could be seen both as a snub to Conservative leader William Hague, as it would go against his nominated choice, but also a boon, as it would remove any threat of Patten attempting to replace Hague as Tory leader.

**Philippines landslide kills 10:** A landslide killed 10 people, including three children, in a mountain village in the southern Philippines, disaster officials said Wednesday. AP says from Manila.

The landslide was triggered by heavy rain Monday afternoon in the town of Pantukan in Compostela Valley province. Antonio Cloma of the Regional Office of Civil Defense said.

## Israel marks 50th anniversary of UN membership

UNITED NATIONS, May 12: Israel marked the 50th anniversary of the day it joined the United Nations by pledging to uphold the UN's ideals of working for peace but vowing it would continue to protect itself, reports AP.

Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon, a keynote speaker at a dinner marking the occasion Tuesday, noted that the right to self-defense was enshrined in the UN Charter and was key to the founding of Israel in 1948.

"Since then we were forced to hold the sword in one hand to defend ourselves while our other hand was already seeking peace and cooperation with our neighbours and the world community at large," Sharon said.

## Saudi Arabia to keep women off roads

RIYADH, May 12: A Saudi minister said Wednesday that women would continue to be kept off the roads in the conservative Moslem kingdom and reiterated their place was not behind the wheel, reports AFP.

"The state has no will or intention to allow women to drive in Saudi Arabia," said Interior Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdul Aziz, squashing rumours that the driving ban was about to be dropped.

He also told Al-Iqtissadiya newspaper that the issue is not even under review. "There is no such study, and every society has its own specific ways," Prince Nayef said.

"We believe we must not make an issue of the question of women," he said. "Women are the sisters of man, but God granted each human being his rights and his obligations."

At the dinner held in the UN Delegates Dining Room, Annan was interrupted by applause when he pledged to work to change the situation.

**US welcomes Israeli court decision**

WASHINGTON, May 12: The State Department Tuesday welcomed a decision by Israel's Supreme Court that stops Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu from closing Palestinian headquarters in Jerusalem, reports AP.

"It appears that a confrontation has been avoided and we welcomed that," Department spokesman James P Rubin said.

Six days before national elections, the high court ordered Israel's police minister and Palestinian officials to explain within seven days why they had failed to achieve a compromise.

Netanyahu, in a tough re-election fight, tried to close the offices to demonstrate his intention to maintain Israel's control over Jerusalem.

Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority seeks a state with its capital in Jerusalem. The Clinton administration takes no official position on Jerusalem's future or on statehood.

On Monday, the State Department avoided any comment on Netanyahu's move to close the offices. But after the Israeli court blocked him, the department on Tuesday welcomed the ruling and said it was important that both sides continue efforts to resolve the dispute peacefully.

In accepting the gift, Annan noted that people who have suffered the deepest depths of human evil, is a fitting addition to United Nations headquarters, he said.

Israel's history is intertwined with that of the United Nations, which was conceived of as a response to the horrors of the Holocaust.

But the relationship between the two has been rocky at best: The Arab-Israeli conflict dominated the world body's first years of existence, and over the years Israel has found itself relying more and more on the United States to protect its interests in the 185-member General Assembly, which is heavily weighted in favour of Arab states and their allies.

In addition, Israel is the only UN members state that doesn't belong to a UN regional group, which prevents it from fully engaging in UN activities, such as being nominated for committee — the Security Council included.

At the dinner held in the UN Delegates Dining Room, Annan was interrupted by applause when he pledged to work to change the situation.

**Gusmao asks students to end protests**

DILI, May 12: Worried that attacks from anti-independence militia groups could derail a UN-sponsored ballot on the future of his troubled homeland, East Timor's jailed resistance leader Jose Alexandre "Xanana" Gusmao has ordered pro-independence students to stop daily protests, reports AP.

In a statement released to reporters on Wednesday, Gusmao warned students that demonstrations, held almost daily in the territorial capital Dili, had provided militias "with a pretext to kill people."

At the dinner held in the UN Delegates Dining Room, Annan was interrupted by applause when he pledged to work to change the situation.

**Netanyahu appeals for support from own party in Monday's polls**

JERUSALEM, May 12: Addressing him has made mistakes, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is appealing to his traditional supporters not to abandon him in Monday's national election, reports AP.

Trailing in the polls, the prime minister has broadcast television ads this week acknowledging shortcomings during his three years in power.

"Some of you don't agree with all that I have done," says Netanyahu, seated in an armchair in his office.

The tactics appear to be

own and would necessarily

have to face the reality of "sharing power with regional par-

ties." Regional parties have to be respected and will ask for representation at the centre," he said.

Addressing the rally which was also organised to com-

memorate the first anniversary

of the "Pokhran II tests," the prime minister in an implicit

rejection of CTBT, said India

could not be pressurised to give

up its nuclear weapons capabili-

ty and would continue with its

missile development pro-

gramme.

India could not compromise

on its national security particu-

larly in view of the ongoing in-

discriminate NATO bombings

of Yugoslavia and renewed ten-

sion on the Kashmir border

which was "hotting up," he said.

Another report from Cal-

cutta says: Prime Minister Atal

Vajpayee would hold

talks with various opposition

parties on the question of India

signing the Comprehensive Test

Ban Treaty (CTBT), Union

Power Minister PR Kumarman-

galan said yesterday.

Describing it as a major is-

sue, Kumarmangalam told a

press conference here that if

parliament was in session it

would have been easy to take a

decision on the issue.

When you sign an interna-

tional treaty, it is required that

parliament puts its stamp on

the issue," he said.

But now it would not be easy

to take a decision since parlia-

ment has been dissolved, he said.

However, the minister said,

the government would have to

take other necessary decisions to

keep the administration run-

ning as there was nothing in the

constitution called "Care-

taker" government.

Meanwhile BJP and its

coalition partner the BJD yes-

terday formally launched their

election campaign for the up-

coming Lok Sabha polls in

Orissa with Union Home Minis-

ter L K Advani asserting that

the Vajpayee-led government

would be voted back to power

with a decisive mandate.

No matter when the elec-

tions are held, the people would

repose their faith in the BJP

and its allies to avenge the con-

sideration of the Congress and the

communists which forced a

mid-term election on them

leaders of both the parties told a

large gathering here while ob-

serving the resurgent India day

to commemorate the first an-

niversary of Pokhran II.

Advani said, though the

Congress was opposed to early

polls, his party would reap the

benefit of the elections to be

held in September-October.

# Off the Record



Two models parade the latest fashion from Australian label Easton Pearson at the Sydney Fashion Week on Wednesday. Australia's top designers as well as those from New Zealand and Hong Kong will parade their garments in the week-long show which has attracted media and buyers from around the world.

## All work and no play...

HANOI: Vietnamese women working in cities are finding life to be all work and no play, making it difficult to find a husband, a report said yesterday, reports AFP.

Women of marriageable age who have taken jobs in the industrial sector complain that full days at the factory and long commutes home leave them too exhausted to put any effort into dating, the Vietnam News reported.

Nguyen Minh Hoa, professor at the Ho Chi Minh City College of Social Sciences and Humanities, was quoted as saying women now comprise 70 per cent of the urban workforce in textiles and food processing.

According to her survey of 100 residential areas in Ho Chi Minh City, 42 per cent of the residents were unmarried women aged 30 or more.

Most Vietnamese women marry in their early 20s, and are considered "e-chong" (unmarriageable) beyond the age of 28.

## Cloned Tasmanian Tiger?

SYDNEY: The fabled Tasmanian Tiger, assumed extinct for more than 60 years, could be brought back to life by cloning after a perfectly preserved specimen was found, scientists said Wednesday, says AFP.

Australian Museum director Michael Archer says a live clone could be created from DNA taken after a preserved baby tiger was found in a bottle in the bowels of the museum. Archer, a professor of paleontology, said it was feasible that people could own them as pets within 50 years.

"We've discovered the miracle bottle in which this time capsule is just waiting to pop back into life," he said.

The baby tiger, a little smaller than a cat, was bottled in 1866.

By chance, it was preserved in alcohol, rather than formalin, which would have destroyed the DNA.

He said the potential of the baby tiger's DNA was much more exciting than the movie Jurassic Park.

"If this can be done it is the beginning -- there's all kinds of extinct animals that we human beings drove to extinction waiting on the same assembly line to be kick-started again."

## China playing with fire, Spore paper says

SINGAPORE, May 12: China is "playing with fire" for allowing anti-American protests and refusing to accept apologies by the United States for the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, Singapore's leading newspaper said Wednesday, reports AP.

"There is no reason for the Chinese people to disbelieve the US explanations for the tragic error, not least because they are so embarrassing," the government-controlled Straits Times daily said in an editorial.

"Nor is there any reason to doubt the sincerity of the US President's apology to the Chinese," it said.

"What is regrettable is the failure of the Chinese media to report the apology promptly, and for the Chinese government not to accept it."

Criticising the protests in China as "inexcusable," the paper warned Chinese