

## International

# US, Japan and S Korea warn North against firing missile



A file photo dated May 15, 1997 shows Mother Teresa greeting well-wishers at the Missionaries of Charity for destitute children in New Delhi. Mother Teresa, who died on September 5, 1997 at the age of 87, will take the fast track to sainthood, the Archbishop of Calcutta Father Henry De Souza said yesterday as the official inquiry into her canonisation began.

—AFP photo

SINGAPORE, July 27: The United States, Japan and South Korea on Tuesday delivered a strong warning to North Korea against carrying out any future missile test, vowing harsh punishment if it went ahead, reports AFP.

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, South Korean Foreign Minister Hong Soon-Young and Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura also urged Pyongyang to use what they termed a "united opportunity" to end its isolation.

Earlier, however, Hong admitted another missile launch was likely, despite all efforts to persuade the North otherwise.

Albright said: "We stressed that another long-range missile launch, whether it is declared to be a missile test or an attempt to place a satellite in orbit, would be highly destabilising and would have very serious consequences for our efforts to build better relations."

She was speaking at a press conference together with her counterparts from Japan and South Korea after they met on the sidelines of annual talks between the Association of

Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its dialogue partners.

The meeting was held amid rising fears that Pyongyang was preparing to launch another missile following the firing of a Taepodong missile last August over Japan.

The ministers "called on North Korea to seize the opportunity" to build a "new and positive relationship with its neighbours and potential partners."

Albright said: "There has never been a better time than this." North Korea should take "advantage of this opportunity" to enhance prospects for growth and for a higher standard of living for North Koreans, she said.

"At the same time we have stressed to the North that improving relations depend on cooperation on security matters," she said.

"And this means ... complete transparency on its nuclear issues and suspension of the development, export and testing of longer-range missiles."

The North, starving and cash-strapped after years of economic decay, agreed in 1994

to freeze its nuclear programme in return for energy aid to which the US, Japan and South Korea contributed.

Hong and Komura echoed the US position, urging the North not to risk hurting its chances of improving ties with the international community.

The three ministers have expressed their unified view that if North Korea takes the comprehensive approach, it will take benefits," Komura said.

"Should they choose the other way, there will be serious negative results for the North," he added, saying it was timely the three ministers issued the warning before "another potential launch".

South Korea's Hong said: "In case of another missile firing, there should be penalties ... they will have to pay the price."

He hoped "Pyongyang will get the right message and respond favourably to proposals for improving ties with the outside world."

However, in a speech delivered during the two-day post-ministerial conference, Hong also said that although all

channels were being used to dissuade North Korea from launching a missile, it was expected to go ahead.

Given North Korea's unpredictable nature, we must think through the eventuality that it will go ahead with the launch," Hong said.

If it does, South Korea, in close cooperation and collaboration with the United States and Japan, will respond with a firmness that matches the seriousness of the missile launch as a threat to regional and global peace and stability."

He said the three countries would "significantly cut down their economic assistance and other incentives to North Korea," which would "clearly be painful for the North".

Hong said the North was not expected to clearly state whether it would accept or reject the offers made by the three countries "given the secretive nature of the region".

"We believe it is still weighing the consequences of accepting or rejecting the offer. What it does with the possible missile launch will be an indication of its thinking."

## India, Pakistan urged to sign CTBT

SINGAPORE, July 27: Asia's key security forum on Monday heard calls by leading powers for newly nuclear-armed India and Pakistan to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and revive a stalled peace process, reports AFP.

India claimed victory at the end of the day-long ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) talks which brought together 22 foreign ministers from Southeast Asia and leading powers, saying it had vindicated New Delhi's stand on a number of issues.

"We reiterate an appeal to refrain from further development of ballistic missiles and from deployment of new missiles in their military forces," she added.

Halonen, who is Finland's foreign minister, welcomed the recent reduction of hostilities across Kashmir and the "disengagement of the infiltrators" from the Pakistani side who crossed over into the Indian-controlled area.

On behalf of the European Union, she urged both New Delhi and Islamabad to resume their dialogue, to respect the sanctity of the Line of Control and agree on a cessation of fighting.

"We urge both India and Pakistan to avoid steps that would lead to arms race, and hope that both will sign the CTBT and support negotiation of a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty in Geneva," she added.

Tarja Halonen, president of the Council of the European Union, said the nuclear and missile tests conducted by India and Pakistan underlined the need for measures to prevent an arms race from escalating in South Asia.

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## EU urges wide support for war crimes court

UNITED NATIONS, July 27: The European Union urged all nations to support the world's first permanent war crimes tribunal, saying Monday that recent atrocities in many parts of the world have again highlighted the need for global action, reports AP.

While the EU did not single out any holdouts, its call was at least partly directed at the United States, one of just seven countries to vote against the establishment of an International Criminal Court last July.

The treaty to establish the court was approved by 120 countries and has since been signed by 83, and ratified by four. It will come into effect when 60 countries have ratified it, which diplomats estimate will be in 2 1/2 to 5 years.

As the commission preparing for the court's operation began its second round of meetings Monday, the EU called for quick ratification to ensure the treaty's early entry into force and offered legal assistance to

countries to move the treaty forward.

"For the court to come into operation early and to be fully effective, the widest support of the international community is needed," said a statement issued by Finland, which holds the rotating EU presidency.

It noted that all 15 EU members, which include many of Washington's closest allies, have signed the treaty.

The United States voted against the treaty because American officials felt it yielded too much prosecutorial power to the new court, leaving US troops and citizens vulnerable to politically motivated prosecutions.

The EU stressed the court's important future role "both in preventing serious violations of international humanitarian law and serious human rights violations, and in ensuring that those responsible for atrocities are brought to justice."

## US eases sanctions against Iran, Libya, Sudan

WASHINGTON, July 27: Starting Tuesday, sanctions against Iran, Libya and Sudan will be eased to allow American companies to sell them food, medicine and medical equipment, reports AP.

All three countries are listed by the State Department as exporters of terrorism, which makes them subject to military and business sanctions. Tougher embargoes that bar other dealings, including humanitarian aid, are being eased.

"Sanctions on food, medicine and medical equipment do not generally advance our policy goals and may have adverse consequences in the humanitarian realm," Stuart Eizenstat, the deputy Treasury secretary, said Monday.

He said companies selling humanitarian goods would need licences from the Treasury Department.

At the same time, the new

policy offers US companies, particularly farmers, an opportunity to boost exports. American farmers, feeling lingering effects of a global financial crisis, are suffering their worst economic period in a decade.

"With farm prices still low and global demand still soft, this action could not have come at a better time," Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman said.

The State Department announced the intended policy change in April. It said barring sales of food and medicine usually fails to hurt targeted regimes but deprives American companies of export opportunities.

Embargoes will continue as before against Iraq, North Korea, Cuba and Serbia, all sanctioned countries to which sales of certain items are already permitted. All but Serbia also are on the State Department terrorism list, along with Syria, which is not under further embargo.

stat said.

Agricultural items permitted for export would include raw, processed and packaged foods, animal feeds, live food animals and seeds for food crops, Eizenstat said.

The regulations do not allow sales of nonfood agricultural commodities such as cotton or tobacco, he said.

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The new policy offers farmers the opportunity to sell more than 13 million tons of grain, worth as much as \$2 billion, to Iran, Libya and Sudan, administration officials estimated.

The new policy generally allows licensed companies to sell "agricultural commodities and products that are intended for ultimate consumption as food by humans or animals," Eizenstat said.



US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright (C) addresses a press conference while her counterparts, Japan's Masahiko Komura (L) and South Korea's Hong Soon-Young, listen during a joint press conference at the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) yesterday.

—AFP photo

## India to build N-powered submarine by 2005

NEW DELHI, July 27: India's long-delayed project to build a nuclear-powered submarine has received a shot in the arm following the Kashmir conflict, a report said on Tuesday, reports AFP.

In the letter, Clinton briefed the Syrian leader on his talks here last week with the newly-elected Israeli prime minister, Ehud Barak, and said it was an opportune time for Syria and Israel to renew their contacts.

He wanted to convey that he believes Barak is fully committed to the peace process and therefore the president hopes that Assad and other leaders in the region will look at this and engage," National Security Council spokesman Mike Hammer said.

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The government has similarly approved and sanctioned construction of Project 17, which involves construction of

newly-designed frigates," the daily said.

Recently a parliamentary panel argued that India needed nuclear submarines to counter China's missile capability in the Indian Ocean.

The committee urged the government to speed up efforts to construct or acquire a nuclear submarine capable of carrying long-range ballistic missiles.

The report by the permanent standing committee on defence said China had seven nuclear submarines in the region in 1995-96.

It cited defence ministry experts as warning that China's sea-based nuclear deterrent, in the form of intercontinental ballistic missiles, had provided with "unlimited bargaining capacity" in the international arena.



Megawati Sukarnoputri, the leader of Indonesian Democracy Party for Struggle (PDIP), shouts slogans during a mass gathering in Senayan in Jakarta yesterday.

—AFP photo

## Megawati marks third anniversary of attack on party office

JAKARTA, July 27: Indonesian opposition leader Megawati Sukarnoputri Tuesday marked the third anniversary of a bloody raid on her party's headquarters with a call to her followers to avoid violence in their drive to make her president, reports AFP.

"Only through non-violence can we take the right path and violence will never solve any problem," believe this, Megawati told about 15,000 cheering supporters at Jakarta's indoor Istora stadium.

It was the first public speech by the daughter of the country's first president Sukarno since her Indonesian Democracy Party-Struggle (PDIP) became the clear winner of the June 7 elections taking 33.7 per cent of the some 105 million votes.

Megawati, dressed in the party's trademark red, appealed to her supporters to trust the party's struggle for reform, without recourse to violence.

She was speaking at a rally to commemorate the third anniversary of an attack on her former party headquarters in central Jakarta by a government and military-backed splinter party faction.

Megawati said the next major national event on the country's political calendar was the convening of the country's highest legislative body, the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) to pick a new president in July.

The ban was necessary to expedite the recovery of the 78-year-old former strongman from a stroke, the head of Suharto's team of doctors, Ibrahim Ginting, was quoted as saying.

He added the restriction also applied to Suharto's hand-picked successor current President B.J. Habibie, and that Habibie understood the reason for the restriction.

Suharto was admitted to Jakarta's Pertamina hospital last week.

tion of the MPR, that we are a civilised nation," Megawati said to resounding cheers.

Many have expressed fears Megawati's wide grassroots support could turn violent if she fails to clinch the presidency.

And to ensure Tuesday's rally did not turn violent, some 5,000 PDIP members were deployed around Jakarta in areas where loyalists were marking the event.

Suharto's doctors bar all visitors

JAKARTA, July 27: Former Indonesian president Suharto's team of doctors have barred him from receiving any visitors except close family members, a report said Tuesday, reports AFP.

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He added the restriction also applied to Suharto's hand-picked successor current President B.J. Habibie, and that Habibie understood the reason for the restriction.

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## Annan refuses to set date for East Timor vote

UNITED NATIONS, July 27: Secretary-General Kofi Annan said voter registration could continue in East Timor but sporadic violence still prevented him from making a final decision on holding a ballot on the territory's future, reports AFP.

The United Nations is responsible for organising a vote that may be held on August 21 or 22 in the former Portuguese colony, which was invaded by Indonesia in 1975. East Timor can choose between independence or autonomy within Indonesia.

Diplomats said Annan might delay the vote to a later date in August because of security concerns and logistic considerations but he had not yet made a decision.

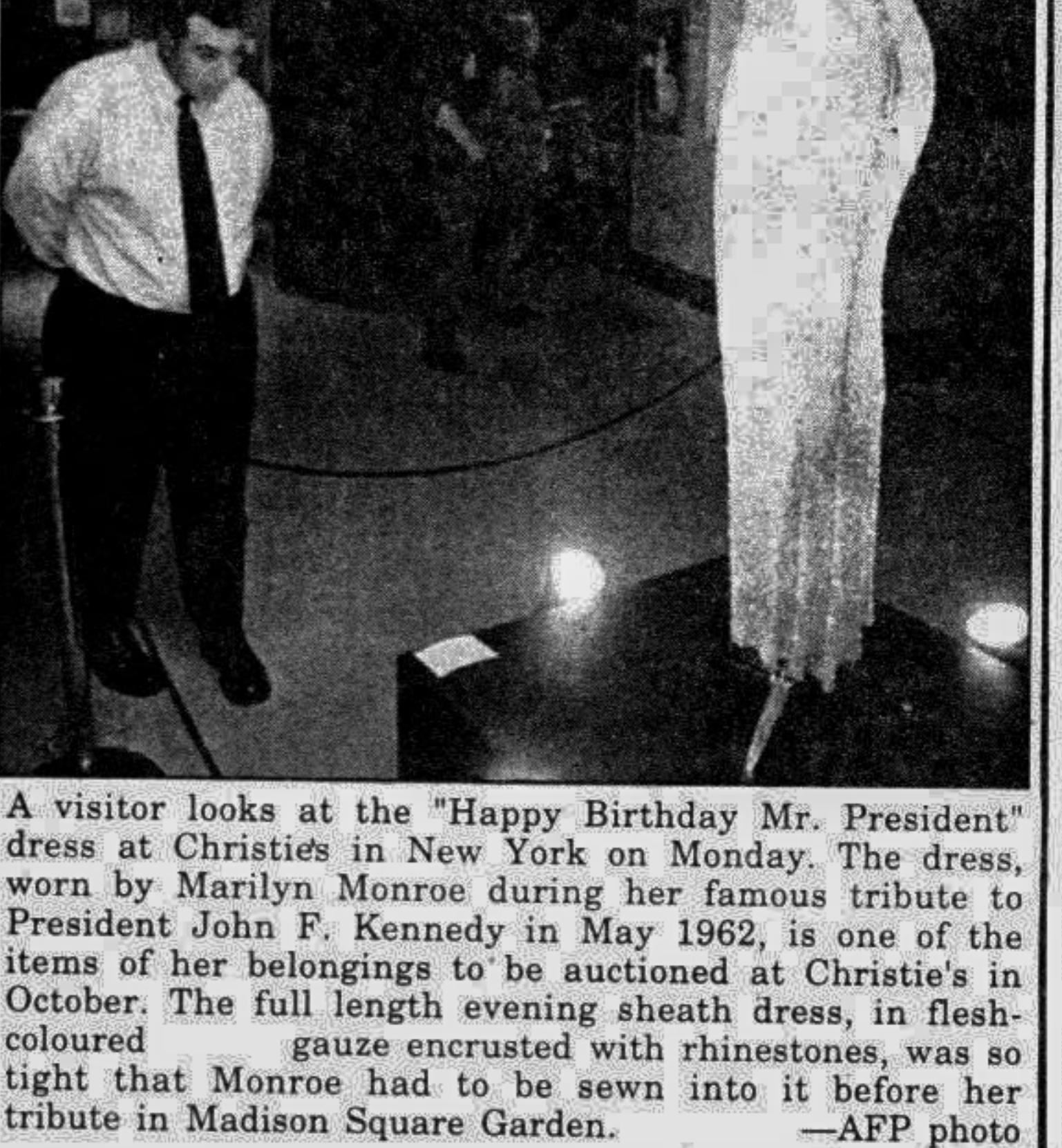
## Laden moves to new hideout for fear of US attack

DUBAI, July 27: Alleged terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden has abandoned his Jalalabad hideout in eastern Afghanistan for fear of an "imminent" US attack, an Arab newspaper reported on Tuesday.

The Saudi dissident, who has been stripped of his nationality, was based in Jalalabad since February.

Pakistani Interior Minister Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain said last week that his country would not allow its territory to be used for any action against bin Laden.

Washington suspects bin Laden of plotting the August 7, 1998 bomb attacks on its embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam that killed 224 people, and has offered a five-million-dollar reward for his capture.



A visitor looks at the "Happy Birthday Mr. President" dress at Christie's in New York on Monday. The dress, worn by Marilyn Monroe during her famous tribute to President John F. Kennedy in May 1962, is one of the items of her belongings to be auctioned at Christie's in October. The dress is a full-length evening sheath dress, in flesh-coloured gauze encrusted with rhinestones, was so tight that Monroe had to be sewn into it before her tribute in Madison Square Garden.

—AFP photo