

Violence mars Indian state election

Indian troops battled Maoist rebels in the east of the country yesterday as violence marred the start of a string of key state elections...

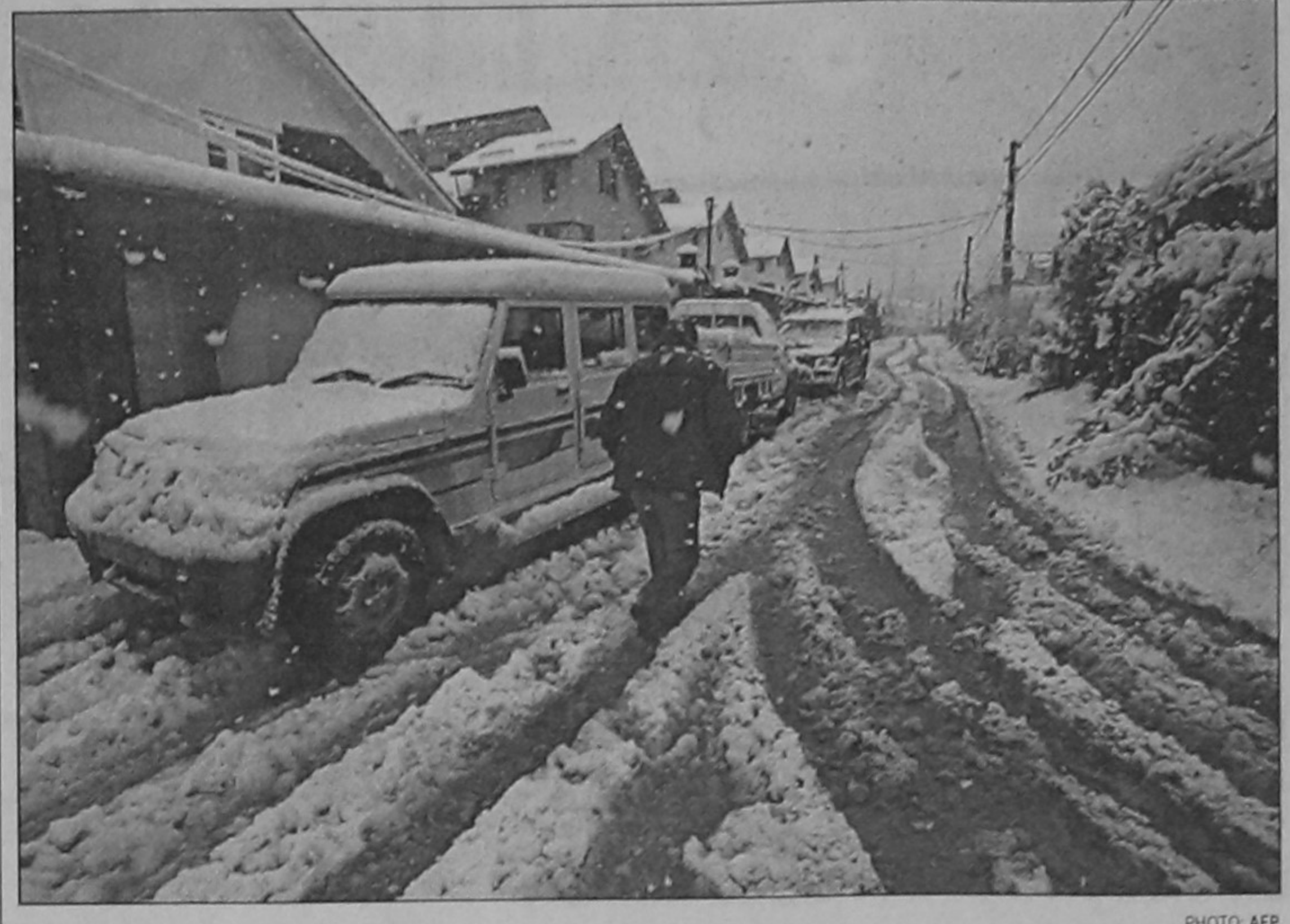
The aim is create fear in the minds of people so that they will not come to vote, said another police official, who asked not to be named.

rural areas across eastern and southern India, as the biggest threat to the country's security. His ruling Congress party, currently the opposition grouping in the state, has made the Maoist insurgency its main election issue.

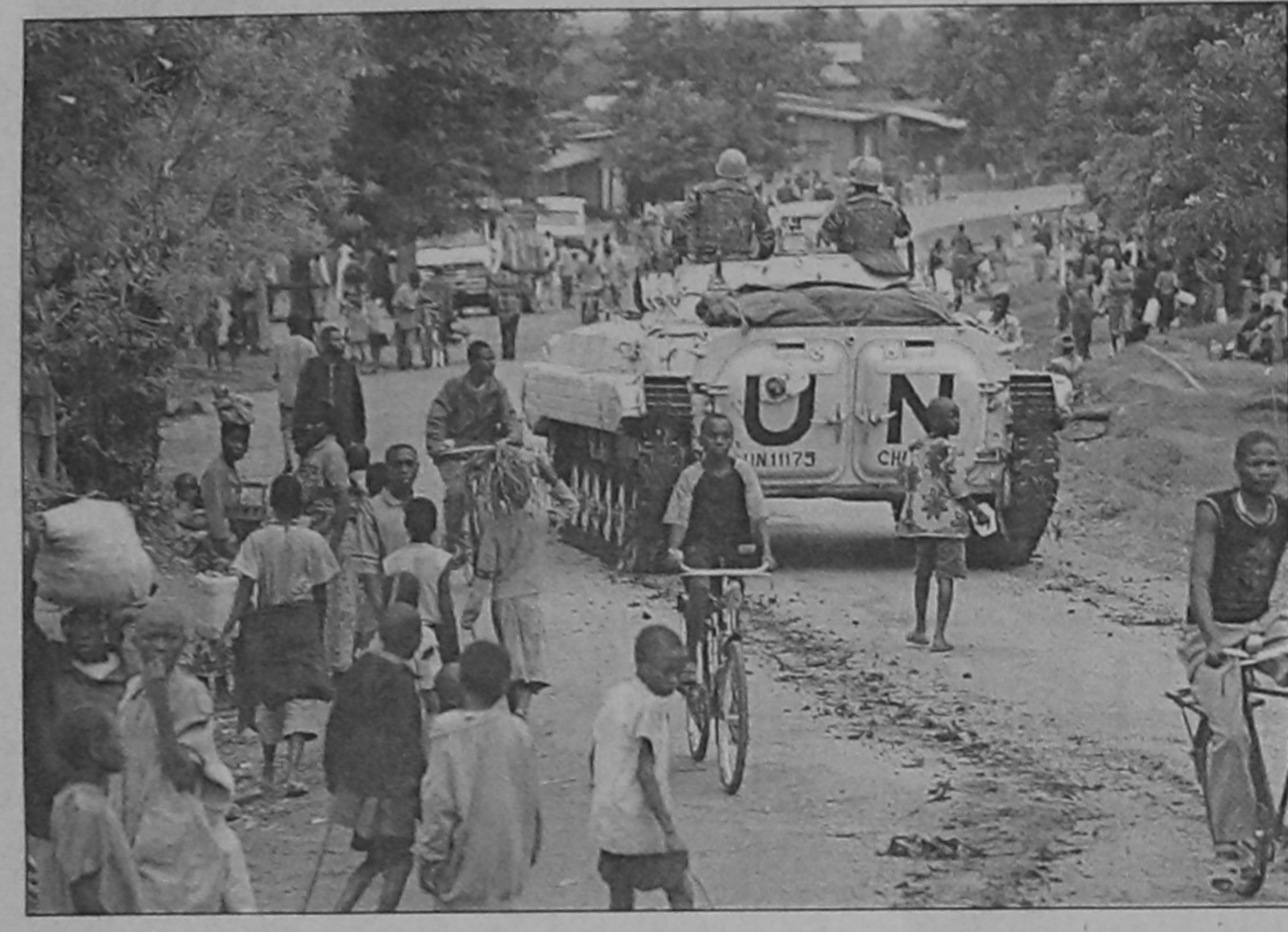
Mizoram in the northeast and the western state of Rajasthan -- will vote before the end of the year. The string of polls comes against a backdrop of rising prices and concerns over the impact of the global financial crisis on India's economy...

Russian parliament approves longer presidential terms

Russia's parliament yesterday approved constitutional changes extending the length of presidential terms, a move opponents said could lead to the return of Vladimir Putin to the presidency.



Traffic moves along a snow-covered street in Srinagar yesterday. Authorities in Indian Kashmir deployed thousands of troops to prevent a rally by Muslim separatists opposed to New Delhi's rule over a part of the Himalayan region.



UN tank makes its way down the main road near a UN mission in DR Congo (MONUC) base in the town of Kiwanja, about 80km north of Goma, the main city of eastern DR Congo's restive Nord-Kivu region, on Nov 13.

UNHCR to move 60,000 DR Congo refugees for their safety

Around 60,000 people displaced by fighting in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo are to be moved out of a camp near the city of Goma because of safety fears, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said yesterday.

Nkunda's troops have surrounded Nord-Kivu's capital Goma, eastern DR Congo's main city, for the past two weeks, forcing UN peacekeepers to send reinforcements to protect the city and its estimated 500,000-strong civilian population.

Nine monks jailed for Myanmar protests

Nine Buddhist monks and 28 pro-democracy activists have been jailed in Myanmar for involvement in last year's massive protests against the military junta, an opposition spokesman said yesterday.

Democracy (NLD) party, told AFP. Also on Thursday, 11 NLD members from the commercial hub of Yangon were jailed for seven-and-a-half years each and another three were given sentences of four to 10 years, he said.

biggest challenge to junta rule in nearly two decades. At least 31 people were killed when security forces cracked down on the protesters, according to the United Nations. Hundreds more activists remain in jail, rights groups say.

British troops to quit Iraq by end of 2009

Says Iraqi official, but UK insists 'no timetable' on pullout. The southern Iraqi city of Basra. "At the minute, we have no timetable," the spokesman told AFP.

Israel to try troops over Palestinian abuse video

The Israeli army is to try several soldiers suspected of posting a video on YouTube that shows them humiliating a bound and blindfolded Palestinian, a statement said yesterday.

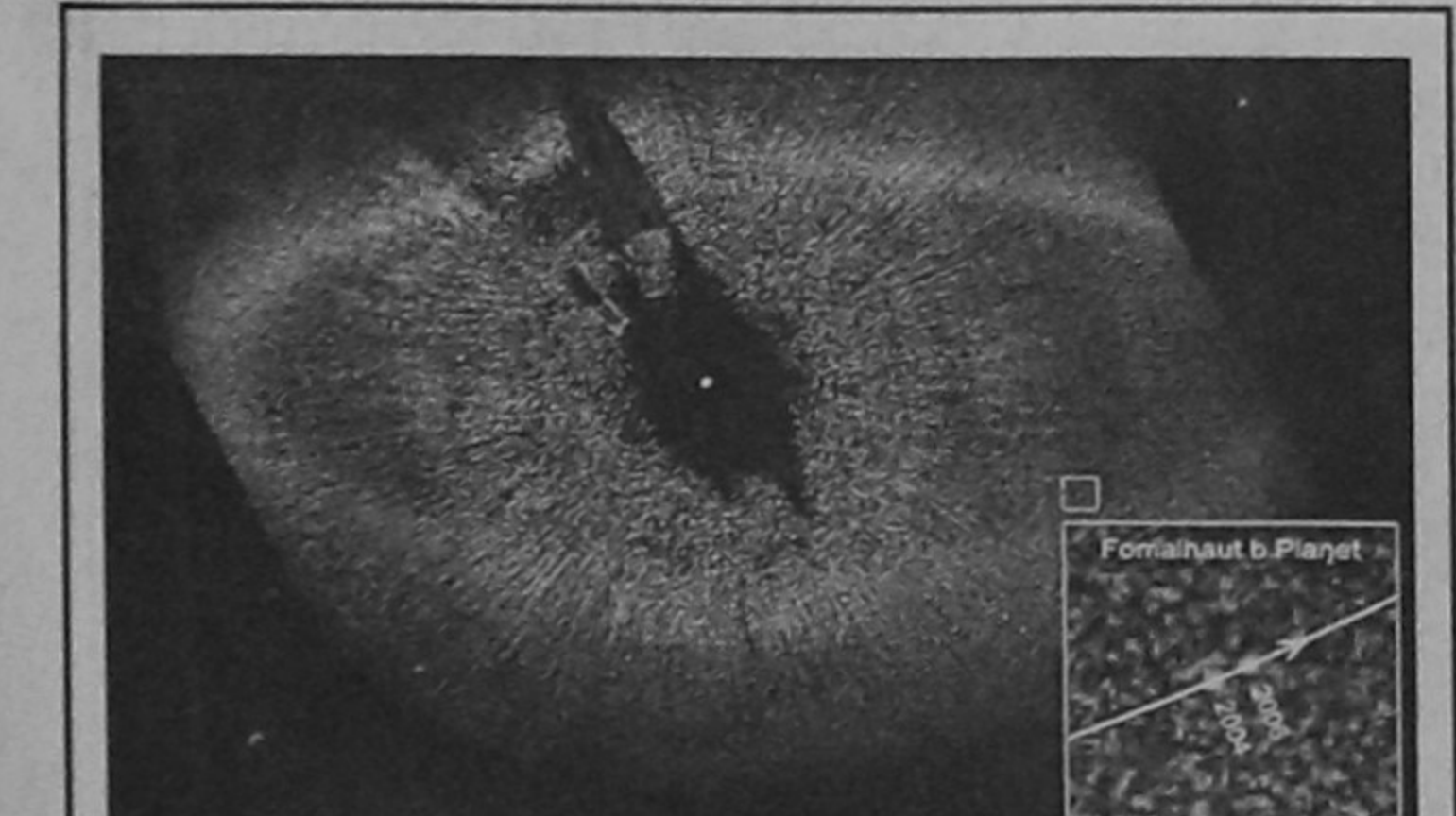
charged in a disciplinary trial. "The Israel Defence Force considers this to be a grave incident and a serious infraction, and is treating it as such. Furthermore, the IDF is taking additional action in order to prevent such incidents in the future."

India's rich lose 60pct of their fortune

The fortunes of India's wealthiest have been cut by more than 60 percent due to the global financial crisis, which has sharply pulled down stock markets, according to a new rich list.



In this combination of pictures created on Friday, Indian industrialists (LR) Lakshmi Mittal, Anil Ambani, Mukesh Ambani and Sunil Mittal address press conferences in New Delhi. The fortunes of India's wealthiest have been cut by more than 60 percent due to the global financial crisis, which has sharply pulled down stock markets, according to a new rich list.



This visible-light image from the Hubble released on Nov 13 shows the newly discovered planet, Fomalhaut b, orbiting its parent star. After an eight-year quest for images, a US astronomer using a camera aboard the Hubble space telescope has snapped the first picture of a planet outside our solar system.

Alien planets outside our solar system

Earth seems to have its first fuzzy photos of alien planets outside our solar system, images captured by two teams of astronomers. The pictures show four likely planets that appear as specks of white, nearly indistinguishable except to the most eagle-eyed experts. All are trillions of miles away from Earth.

Prince Charles turns 60 waiting for throne

Talk about an apprentice. By the time he turns 60 yesterday, Prince Charles will have spent a lifetime in line to become king. That's put him in quite a bind. The longest-waiting heir in British history only ascends to the throne when his beloved mother dies or decides to step down.

Bin Laden is isolated, Qaeda resilient: CIA

Saudi-born bin Laden would deal a severe blow to the terror group blamed for the attacks of September 11, 2001. "Because of his iconic stature, his death or capture clearly would have a significant impact on the confidence of his followers, both core al-Qaeda and these unaffiliated extremists ... throughout the world."

Biden meets Cheney

Vice President Dick Cheney welcomed his successor, vice president-elect Joseph Biden, to his official residence Thursday, shrugging off his visitor's stinging campaign trail attacks.

Advertisement for a financial service, featuring a circular logo with Bengali text and a portrait of a man.

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