

# Asia rushes to bury the victims

Associated Press

Barada Aceh, December 29

CARGO PLANES touched down with promised aid on Wednesday, bearing everything from lentils to water purifiers to help survivors facing the threat of epidemic after this week's quake-tsunami catastrophe. The first Indonesian military teams reached the devastated west coast of Sumatra, finding thousands of bodies and hiking southern Asia's death toll to more than 80,000.

Town after town along the Sumatran coast was covered with mud and sea water, with homes flattened or torn apart, an AP reporter saw on a helicopter overflight with the military commander of the island's Aceh province. The only signs of life were a handful of villagers scavenging for food on the beach.

Western Sumatra suffered a double blow in Sunday's disaster, shattered both by the most powerful earthquake in 40 years and perhaps the deadliest tsunami in recorded history, which wreaked destruction across a dozen nations. "The damage is truly devastating," Maj. Gen. Endang Suwarya said. "Seventy-five percent of the west coast is destroyed and some places it's 100 per cent. These people are isolated and we will try and get them help."

The first military teams reached the devastated fishing town of Meulaboh on Sumatra's coast, finding some 3,700 bodies — bringing Indonesia's toll to more than 45,268. That toll was likely to rise as more bodies are found. One official on Tuesday estimated that as many as 10,000 people were dead in Meulaboh alone.

From East Africa to southern Asia, chances faded of finding more survivors of Sunday's massive, quake-driven walls of water. Tens of thousands of people were still missing, German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder said 1,000 Germans were unaccounted for. "We have to fear that a number of Germans clearly in the three-digit numbers will be among the dead," Schröder said. Currently, 26 Germans have been confirmed dead.

Sri Lanka on Wednesday listed more than 22,493 people dead, India close to 11,000 — with 8,000 missing and feared dead. Thailand put its toll at more than 1,829. A total of more than 400 were killed in Malaysia, Myanmar, Bangladesh, the Maldives, Somalia, Tanzania and Kenya.

Millions were homeless in the disaster, contending with hunger and the threat of disease, which the UN health agency said could double the toll. At Banda Aceh, the wrecked capital of Indonesia's Aceh province, bulldozers dug mass graves for thousands of corpses lining the streets and lawns as authorities hurried to get the dead in the ground.

Wildlife enthusiasts in Sri Lanka noted their surprise in seeing no evidence of large-scale deaths of animals, suggesting they had safely made it to high ground. "Maybe what we think is true, that animals have a sixth sense," said Gehan de Silva Wijeyeratne, whose Jetwing Eco Holidays runs a hotel in the Yala National Park.

Aid groups struggled to mount what they described as the largest relief operation the world has seen, and to head off the threat of cholera and malaria epidemics that could break out where water supplies are polluted with bodies and debris.



A girl is comforted by her family during the cremation of a relative in Thap Lamu, 900 km south of Bangkok, on Wednesday. REUTERS

# 'Stingy' US doubles tsunami aid

Reuters

Washington, December 29

THE UNITED STATES on Tuesday more than doubled to \$35 million its pledge of aid for victims of the Asian tsunami and rejected suggestions that rich nations were being "stingy" with aid.

Calling the new pledge preliminary, State Department spokesman Adam Ereli said. "We know the needs will be greater. This was a disaster of almost unimaginable dimension, and it's going to require massive support for some time."

President George W. Bush said today that he has formed an international aid group with other nations to respond to the massive tsunami disaster. Bush interrupted his vacation at his Texas ranch to speak with reporters for the first time since Sunday's earthquake. "It's just beyond our comprehension to think about how many lives have been lost," Bush said.

He announced that the US has "established a regional core group with India, Japan and Australia to help coordinate relief efforts. I'm confident more nations will join this core group in short order."

Secretary of State Colin Powell acknowledged the international community could ultimately have to give billions of dollars in aid but he rejected comments from a top UN official that rich nations were "stingy" with their aid.

Asked on Monday about the response of rich nations to crises like the tsunami, UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Jan Egeland said: "It is beyond me why are we so stingy, really." But he rowed back from the statements on Tuesday, telling reporters: "I've been misinterpreted when I yesterday said that I believed that rich countries in general can be more generous."

"It has nothing to do with any particular country or the response to this emergency. We are in early days and the response has so far been overwhelmingly positive," he said. "The US is not stingy," Powell said. The Pentagon said it ordered 12 vessels to head to the region where the death toll stood at nearly 60,000, but no decisions had been made on their role in relief efforts or on how many Marines aboard the ships might be used on the ground.

# After the waves, Rich and famous hit alike

Agence France-Presse  
Hong Kong, December 29

RICH AND poor alike were swept up by Asia's killer tsunami, with a supermodel, multi-millionaire football players, royalty and movie stars among those running for their lives.

Czech supermodel Petra Nemcova clung to a palm tree for eight hours in the devastated Thai resort of Khao Lak after being hit by a wall of water in Sunday's deadly tidal waves, her publicist in New York said.

Her British boyfriend, fashion photographer Simon Atee, is missing. "People were screaming and kids were screaming all over the place, screaming 'help, help'. And after a few minutes you didn't hear the kids any more," Nemcova told *The New York Daily News* from her hospital bed in Thailand.

There was no lucky escape for Bhumi Jensen, the 21-year-old grandson of Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej who was killed at the same popular resort area when the waves struck. "It's a national tragedy," said a grim-faced PM Thaksin Shinawatra.

British actor and film director

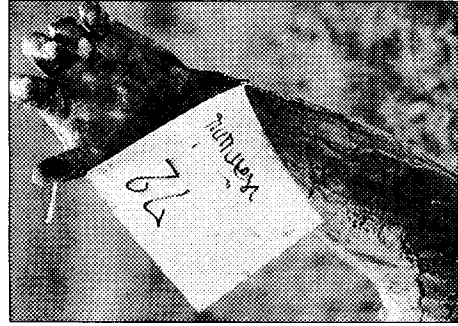


SURVIVORS File photographs of Jet Li with his wife (left) and Czech supermodel Petra Nemcova who escaped by sheer luck.

Richard Attenborough was also in mourning after the death of his granddaughter in the Thai catastrophe. Attenborough's eldest daughter Jane is missing, as is her mother-in-law, Jane Holland.

Chinese action hero Jet Li survived the horror on the picture-postcard Maldives islands, sustaining minor injuries when the tidal wave swamped the hotel where he was staying. Li grabbed his four-year-old daughter when their hotel room started to flood and escaped.

Stars of the sporting arena were also caught up in the tsunami



A tag is placed around a dead person's wrist so the body can be identified among hundreds in Phuket on Wednesday. REUTERS

BODY COUNT 55,000 ■ UPROOTED LANDMINES THREATEN RESCUE WORK IN LANKA

# Biggest relief effort for worst disaster

Asia News Network & Agencies

**BANDA ACEH** (Indonesia) /CHENNAI, Dec. 28. — Mourners in Sri Lanka buried their dead with bare hands today, while displaced and hungry islanders in Indonesia turned to looting two days after the devastating tsunami strike that the United Nations said may be history's worst natural disaster.

An estimated 55,000 people were dead, including 27,174 in Indonesia and 18,000 in Sri Lanka. In India, the toll was 8,000. But the government put the figure at 4,371. Thailand reported 1,500 deaths. Another 1,500 Swedish vacationers were reported missing.

Tamil Nadu and the Andamans, the worst-hit in India, accounted for 4,500 and 3,000 deaths. The small fishing town of Nagapattinam alone accounted for 2,500 deaths. However, Tamil Nadu chief minister Miss Jayalitha put the toll in the state at 4,000. In Kerala, the toll crossed the 150-mark, while 96 people were reported dead in Andhra Pradesh. Officials expect the figures to rise further.

Eleven nations, in a band of destruction spanning from South-east Asia to Africa, tallied corpses as they filled beaches and choked morgues. The International Red Cross feared malaria and cholera may add to the toll, as aid agencies mounted what UN officials said would be the world's biggest relief effort. "This is unprecedented," said Mr Yvette Stevens, an emergency relief coordinator at the UN office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

In Sri Lanka's severely hit town of Galle, officials mounted a loudspeaker on a fire engine to call upon residents to lay bodies on the roads for collection and cremation. Elsewhere, residents undertook burial efforts with forks or bare hands to scrape a final resting place for the victims. The disaster has also uprooted landmines in the insurgency-scarred

## CASUALTIES

INDONESIA:	27,174
SRI LANKA:	18,000
INDIA:	8,000
THAILAND:	1,500
SOMALIA:	100
MYANMAR:	90
MALAYSIA:	65
MALDIVES:	55
BANGLADESH:	2

island nation, threatening to kill or maim aid workers and survivors who attempt to return to what's left in the affected areas.

In Indonesia, rescue workers battled to reach isolated coasts in Sumatra, which was closest to the epicentre of Sunday's undersea quake.

The disaster could be history's costliest, with "many billions of dollars of damage," said the UN under-secretary in charge of emergency relief coordination.

Scores of people were also killed in Malaysia, Myanmar and the Maldives. Two people died in Bangladesh. The waves travelled as far as Somalia, where hundreds were reported dead, and Seychelles.

Children have emerged as the biggest victims of the tsunami tragedy. The UN estimated that at least one-third of the dead were children, Unicef spokesman Mr Alfred Ironside said in New York.

The biggest peacetime rescue and relief operation in India gained momentum with the Army, Air Force and Navy joining civil agencies to provide relief. Rescue workers dragged out corpses from lagoons, backwaters, ponds and from under shattered houses on sea shores. In Delhi, the Centre today announced that the Kalpakkam atomic power plant in Tamil Nadu was "safe". A decision was also taken at a group of ministers' meeting to provide soft loans to the affected, including fishermen.

NATURE'S FURY: pages 4 & 5

## Tsunami reaches USA

Stanley Theodore in Hyderabad

Dec. 28. — North and South America felt tsunami's effect today as it moved eastwards over North and South Pacific Ocean. It moved exactly in the opposite direction from Sumatra, through the Indian Ocean, to crash into the eastern coasts of Africa, with water rising over 10 feet.

Tsunami also struck the coasts of Cocos Island, Kenya, Mauritius, Reunion and Seychelles. It crossed into the Pacific Ocean and was recorded along the west coast of South and North America, the US Geological Survey's website said. This overtakes the 1960 Chile tsunami in terms of making its presence felt right around the world.

As the tsunami reached new areas, the it was Somalia's turn to bear the brunt of nature's fury. The Somali President said today that entire villages and coastal towns were swept away in the nation located 6,000 km west of Sumatra. The *Jamaica Observer* said waves travelled 3 km inland, along riverbeds, in some parts.

The tsunami effect forced Kenya to close down all beaches. The situation was similar in Tanzania, 7,200 km from the epicentre, where several low-lying areas were flooded. One person died and nine were reported missing from Seychelles, north-east of Madagascar, 6,500 km from Sumatra, the *International Herald Tribune* reported today.



CONTINENTAL CALAMITY: A wooden statue faces a pyre on the Pathong beach in Thailand's Phuket island. — AFP

# The Wreckage

**26 countries alerted in 15 minutes, India not one of them**

■ Top world expert Indian Tad Murty: I tried several times, Govt said no money

**SONU JAIN & ROYDEN D'SOUZA**  
NEW DELHI, GOA, DEC 27

AFTER yesterday's earthquake, there were 90 minutes before the first wave of the deluge crashed into the Indian coast. Within 15 minutes of the earthquake, scientists running the tsunami warning system for the Pacific had issued a cautionary from their Honolulu hub, to 26 participating countries. India was not among them.

This tsunami warning stated: "Revised magnitude based on analysis of mantle waves (8.5). This earthquake is located outside the Pacific. No destructive tsunami threat exists for the pacific basin based on historical and tsunami data... There is the possibility of a tsunami near the epicentre."

The last part of this warning was crucial to India, as it was this very "possible tsunami" that ravaged the east coast.

The irony could not have been sharper. One of the people who helped set up the Pacific Tsunami Warning System and the Canadian Tsunami Warning System three decades ago was a Canada-based Indian, Tad Murty.

Now attached to the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Murty says key equipment and computer models could have helped save thousands in southeast Asia on Sunday. He has personally taken up the issue of setting up a 24-hour tsunami warning system

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



A father with the body of his eight-year-old son in Cuddalore on Monday. *AP/Datta, Reuters*

REUTERS

## Pushed off map, Nicobar IAF base struggles to come back

■ Trauma: officer with handycam filmed tragedy and then vanished

**SUBRATA NAGCHOUDHURY & SHISHIR GUPTA**  
CAR NICOBAR ISLANDS, NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 27

THE day after, the sea here almost mocks in its ordinariness. The sun blazing, when you look down from the AN-32 on its way to Car Nicobar from Port Blair, there are just tiny white flecks on the calm Bay of Bengal. If you don't search for land, it's as if yesterday didn't happen.

But once you land, you know why this is where an estimated 2,000 are feared dead, this is where once an Indian Air Force Base was.

The base has been pushed off the map by the sea and along with it, have perished over 100 officers and IAF personnel—of the total base strength of 1700. The entire coastline is strewn with trees that snapped like twigs. Those people who survived are so traumatised that even the slightest movement of wind or wave makes them run



out into the open from the Air Force station hangars and other installations which are doubling up as shelters.

This was a plum posting, says Group Captain and Station Commander V Bandopadhyaya. "The officers and men wanted to stay here, wilfully." Because the picture-postcard Air Force colony was drawn along the coastline, dotted with elegant two-storeyed bungalows. The sea was barely 200 m away, the front yard almost a private beach.

But not today. Most of those houses have been flattened. In many spots, even debris is missing, the house swallowed up whole.

Standing, then staggering on the debris, Captain P Maheshwar counts himself lucky—he lost everything but has his wife and child.

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## 'Can't you smell it? Fish doesn't smell this way'

■ Following those who are searching for their missing, and dead

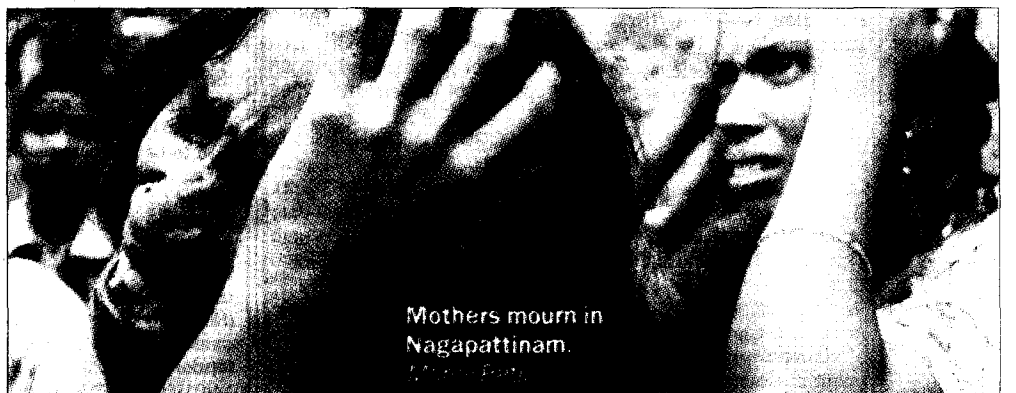
**RAJEEV P I**  
CHENNAI, DECEMBER 27

PERCHED silently on the wreckage of a canoe that was crushed by the waves yesterday, gazing out into the calm sea, Thyagarajan is worried about tomorrow—"moon-ram pakkam (the third day)".

He believes in the fisher-folk's myth that if the sea loves you, it will return your body the third day it takes you. And, he is sure the sea loved his mother Pachamma. After all, like most others in Sreenivasapuram, she had lived near the sea for all 65 years of her life.

It had happened scarcely a few minutes after he left his mother in their little thatched home on the beach and walked upto the village tea shop in Chennai's Foreshore Estate. Suddenly, there was the din of the huge waves crashing in, flattening everything on the way. Then, the shouts and screams.

An hour later, when the sea was spent and dragging the debris back with it, Thyagarajan managed to reach his battered hut, somehow still left standing. The waters had taken away most of his meagre belongings. And with it, his mother.



Mothers mourn in Nagapattinam.

He had spent yesterday running all over the beach, hoping the waters would have miraculously thrown her back alive. And then, most of last night hitching rides in goods tempos, going from one city hospital to another where they were piling

up the dead, hoping and not hoping to find her among them.

By noon today, he had looked up the last of the eight new bodies that were trucked in. Then, he came back to his beach.

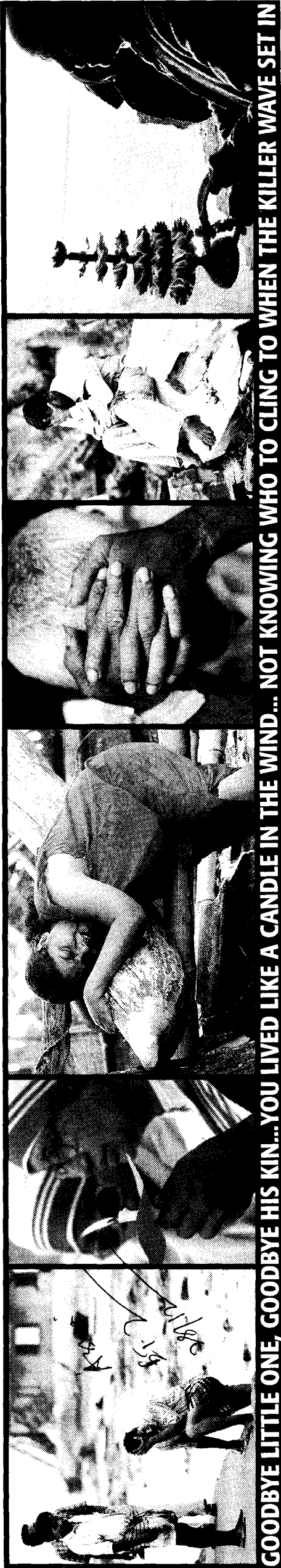
"Maybe, she will come back

to say she had run away when the waves came... but she was too old to run," he says.

A hundred metres away, 12-year-old Syed is searching for something to salvage from the remains scattered around a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

SERIOUS, SOLID POLITICS: GOING BEHIND THE SCENES AND DE-CODING THE POWER MATRIX FOR YOU



GOODBYE LITTLE ONE, GOODBYE HIS KIN... YOU LIVED LIKE A CANDLE IN THE WIND... NOT KNOWING WHO TO CLING TO WHEN THE KILLER WAVE SET IN



The situation is bad but there is no need to panic. Nobody could prevent what happened.

Pranab Mukherjee, Defence Minister

One-and-half hours is sufficient (reaction) time. But there was no awareness and preparation for such a situation, which caused loss of life.

Sriprakash Jaiswal, MoS, Home

The Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited has assured that the Madras Atomic Power Station was brought in safe shutdown condition immediately after a tsunami hit the coast, and that there is no danger of nuclear radiation.

Fisherfolk in several coastal areas are now wary of venomous sea creatures, which have entered the land. Police said a seven-year-old boy had died after being bitten by a snake at Tranquebar in Tamil Nadu on Sunday night. People of the area said not only snakes, but even scorpions were found floating in the water.



# Defence forces step up rescue efforts

SHIV AROOR  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 27

DEFENCE forces intensified rescue operations in the quake-ravaged Andaman and Nicobar Islands even as Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Air Chief Marshal S Krishnaswamy reached Port Blair this afternoon in the midst of persisting tremors.

About 56 IAF personnel also arrived on the island today for rescue work. Back on the mainland, an Engineering Corps column in Chennai was dispatched to badly-hit Nagapattinam, while a 7 J-K Rifles column is in Kalpakkam.

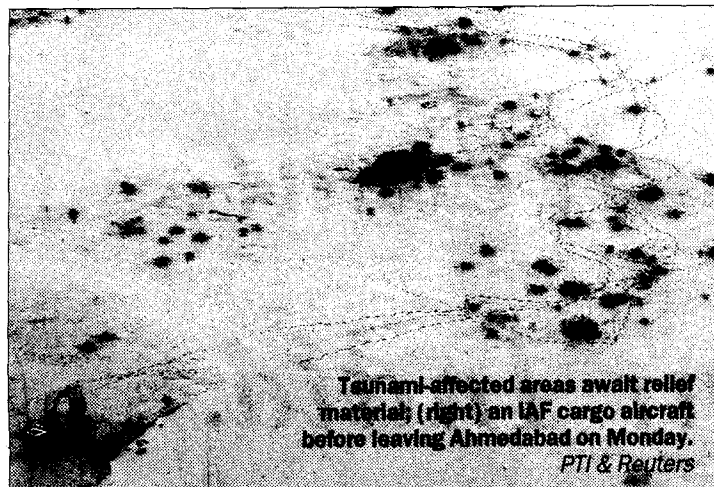
The Air Chief said late last night that 20-30 fixed wing aircraft were on standby for deployment to the Andamans, though the IAF is now reworking its rescue strategy. Questions were raised yesterday on

whether Port Blair could accommodate so many aircraft, or have the infrastructure to receive 30 aircraft in succession. The floods destroyed two IAF choppers on Car Nicobar while two others were damaged.

With the entire naval fleet on standby, there is an immediate likelihood of more ships, apart from the 20 deployed yesterday, being pressed into rescue service for what is continuing to unfold as one of the most harrowing and dispersed hunts for dead and injured in the country's history of natural disasters.

Yesterday, the Defence Ministry deployed twenty naval warships, about 100 IAF and Navy helicopters, five aircraft, hundreds of army troops trained in rescue and a lone maritime patrol plane to record the damage from above.

Assistance to Sri Lanka (code-named Operation Rainbow) included Dornier aircraft sorties with



Tsunami-affected areas await relief material; (right) an IAF cargo aircraft before leaving Ahmedabad on Monday. PTI & Reuters

medical supplies, apart from four Naval ships sent to the Trincomalee (INS Sandhayak, INS Sukanya) and Galle (INS Sharda, INS Sutlej) ports. The first of three Western Naval Command vessels dispatched to the Maldives yesterday, INS

Mysore, will be reaching the islands at 8 am Tuesday under Operation Castor. INS Udaygiri and INS Aditya will reach on December 29 and December 30 respectively.

Coast Guard vessel Durgabai Deshmukh provided assistance at



Kollam in Kerala today, while two choppers are now in Chennai. Three Coast Guard ships in Port Blair, the Bhikajicarna, Akkadevi and Vivek have been sent to Campbell Bay. Several ships are now off the coast of Tamil Nadu, Andhra

Pradesh, West Bengal and Orissa.

The Navy has scrambled its Chetak helicopters from the Arakkonam base for rescue operations in some of the worst-hit areas — Pondicherry, Cuddalore, Nagapattinam and Karakkal. More Chetaks have taken off from a ship on the East Coast for operations in Prakasham, Nellore, Krishna and West Godavari in Andhra Pradesh.

Six naval ships from Port Blair are now at Car Nicobar, Kardeep and Campbell Bay, including a large landing tanker ship. The INS Gharial, on its way back from a joint exercise yesterday was also alerted and diverted to Car Nicobar.

A Navy Tupolev-142 maritime reconnaissance plane will continue to perform observation sorties over the Andamans, while a second Coast Guard Dornier sortie was performed this morning for damage assessment over the Maldives.

Vice-President Bhairon Singh Shekhawat and Lok Sabha Speaker Somnath Chatterjee contributed their one month's salary to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. Condoling the loss of lives, Shekhawat announced donation of his one month's salary amounting to Rs 40,000, an official release said.

Finance Minister P. Chidambaram donated Rs 1 lakh to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund for use in relief operations to be carried out in areas hit by the tidal wave. Earlier at the FICCI annual general meeting, Chidambaram appealed to India Inc to donate generously to the PM's Relief Fund to help those affected by the tsunami.

The United States announced an immediate relief of Rs 44.5 lakh for India. In a letter to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Ambassador David C. Mulford announced the relief and expressed condolences on behalf of the people and government of the US to the tsunami-affected people.

MPs and MLAs of Congress and PMK from Tamil Nadu have decided to contribute their one month's salary for relief work in the affected districts of the state. MDMK general secretary Vaiko, too, announced a contribution of Rs 10 lakh from the party funds for relief work.

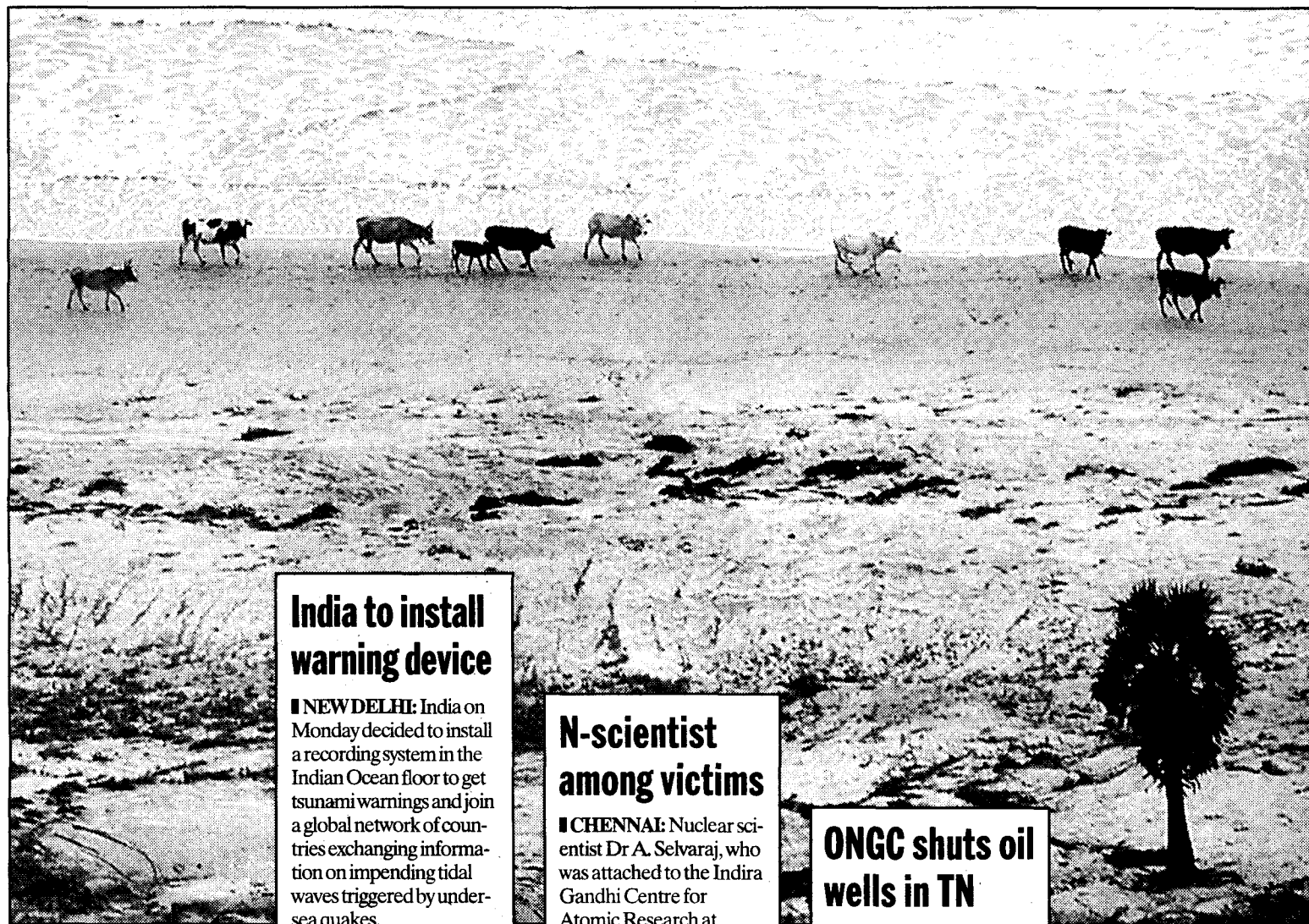
Delhi government announced an immediate relief of Rs 2 crore and appealed to its employees to donate their one-day salary to help victims. Lt Governor B.L. Joshi has also contributed one month's salary to the relief fund.

CPI(M) in West Bengal decided to organise a month-long statewide mass collection drive to raise funds for victims and announced an initial donation of Rs 7 lakh for the affected in TN and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi has donated Rs 25 lakh to the PM's Relief Fund to help victims. The Chief Minister expressed deep sorrow at the loss of lives and property, official sources said in Guwahati on Monday. — Agencies

28 DEC 2004

INDIAN EXP



## India to install warning device

NEWDELHI: India on Monday decided to install a recording system in the Indian Ocean floor to get tsunami warnings and join a global network of countries exchanging information on impending tidal waves triggered by under-sea quakes.

"While Indonesia, a member of the network, got the information, India did not," Minister of State for Science and Technology Kapil Sibal said.

Sibal reporters here that the devastation that the new system would be linked to existing devices called data buoys which record sea surface parameters.

## N-scientist among victims

CHENNAI: Nuclear scientist Dr A. Selvaraj, who was attached to the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research at Kalpakkam, was among those killed in the tsunami tidal waves which struck the coastline.

Atomic energy sources said the body of Selvaraj had been already identified.

Meanwhile police sources said the toll in Kalpakkam area was nearly 60 with an unspecified number missing.

## ONGC shuts oil wells in TN

NEWDELHI: The Oil and Natural Gas Corp has shut three producing wells in Tamil Nadu. "The wells have been shut temporarily for three days," a top government official said. He, however, said Sunday's devastating tidal wave had not impacted oil and gas exploration work in the Bay of Bengal and refineries on the East Coast.

## LIFE RETURNS...

Cattle roam the sea shore in search of food in Cuddalore, a day after it was struck by tidal waves, on Monday. With more and more bodies being recovered from coastal areas of Tamil Nadu, the death toll in the state rose to over 3,600 till Monday evening, as normalcy was slowly restored. PTI

Be it known to General Public at Large that my client Sh Bishan Dass S/o Late Sh Ganpat Ram R/o J-1/24, D.D.A. Flats, Kalkaji, New Delhi-19 has disinherited his daughter named Ms. Rachna Kumari from his entire movable and immovable properties from this day onwards as she is not faithful to my client and her act is also indifferent towards my client. Any person dealing with her will do at his/her own risk and my above named client will not be responsible in any manner whatsoever. Sd/-

(K. S. KASHYAP) Advocate  
A-11/1, Pandav Nagar, Delhi

# Mumbai keeps date with saint's b'day celebrations

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 27

AS THE tsunami torpedoed South-East Asia on Sunday, many invoked the blessings of Baba Makhdoom Shah, the revered saint of Mahim.

The saint's 590th birthday celebrations, Urs (December 26-January 4), kicked off with Mumbai police's traditional offering of sandal, scent and shawls at his dargah on Sunday. "Baba possesses unlimited healing powers. I am praying for the peace of those who perished in the toofan," said 81-year-old Siddiq Ali, a bearded fakir associated with the dargah for over three decades.

During the next week, more than three lakh people are expected to await their turn at the crowded central Mumbai shrine that's hemmed in by

Makhdoom Mahimi traces his lineage to Prophet Mohammed  
Once his mother asked him for water. As he went to fetch it, she fell asleep. He spent the night holding the jar of water. Seeing his obedience, the mother called him Makhdoom (servant of God). The name stuck.  
Author of 84 books, Makhdoom's best-known work is *Al-Tafsir-Al-Rehmani*, a commentary on the Quran.

restaurants, sweetmeat stores and flower-sellers.

Earlier, more than 100 serving and retired constables, led by Deputy Commissioner of Police Sandeep Bishnoi, meandered the lanes and bylanes of Mahim.

Clad in white kurta-pyja-

mas, the cops danced to the beats of nagaras (drums), screaming "Makhdoom Shah ki jai". "Every constable who joins Mahim police station must first bow to Baba," said Anand Chavan, Senior Police Inspector at Mahim police station. "Baba resided where the Mahim police station stands today. We have a room dedicated to his memory here."

Chavan has a personal reason to thank the Baba. Two decades ago, he started as a constable. "Thanks to his daya (mercy), I am a Senior PI today. I visit his dargah every Thursday," he said.

As the police procession reached the saint's tomb in the evening, frenzy gripped the stone-walled sanctum sanctorum. Devotees jostled outside even as the police offered prayers inside.





# Economic toll will be less

**Singapore, Dec. 27 (Reuters):** Fishing villages have been wiped out and money-spinning tourist resorts wrecked, but the economic cost of the giant seismic waves that swamped coasts across south Asia will be much smaller than the human toll.

Sri Lanka's economy will be hardest hit and Thailand's important tourism industry will have to pick itself up again after suffering setbacks from Sars and political unrest.

But overall, Asia's economies and markets are likely to suffer at most a glancing blow from the disaster.

"I do see some near-term impact from the unfortunate event but we're not about to cut growth rates in response to it," said Lian Chia Liang, an economist at JP Morgan Chase in Singapore.

Spending to rebuild smashed hotels and infrastructure could offset lower tourism receipts in the next few months, he said. As Sri Lanka appealed for aid and global relief agencies swung into action, the IMF said it stood ready to help in any way it could.

Financial markets, though, only flinched. Some travel shares tumbled and the Thai stock exchange was down 1.6 per cent, but the Thai



French rescue workers wait to board a plane for Sri Lanka at Roissy airport, outside Paris. (AFP)

baht and Indonesian rupiah lost only a quarter of a per cent.

"It will be more of a story of human tragedy rather than economic costs," said Song Seng Wun, an economist at brokerage GK Goh in Singapore.

Arjuna Mahendran, chief economist and strategist at Credit Suisse in Singapore, noted that Southeast Asia's bourses are dominated by property firms, banks and export-orientated manufactur-

ers, which will be little affected by the catastrophe. "I don't think you're going to have a major fall-out," he said.

But Mahendran, who used to head Sri Lanka's investment board, said the disaster would set back the island's economy by a year and might even result in negative growth next quarter.

Sri Lanka logged a record 500,642 tourist arrivals in 2003, boosted after a ceasefire the year before in a two-decade-old civil war pitting Tamil Tiger

rebels and the government.

The government had been hoping to double those numbers by 2010. But the tsunami, which killed 10,200 people in Sri Lanka and left hundreds of thousands homeless, destroyed transport links from Colombo to the main tourist destinations in the south of the island, where a string of luxury hotels was badly damaged.

"That is a major blow because tourism was the fastest-growing component of the economy," Mahendran said. "You'll have to rebuild the roads and the railway lines and it'll take about a year."

The timing could not be worse for Sri Lanka because its biggest industry, textiles, is bracing for big job losses when the end of international quotas on January 1 exposes it to the full blast of competition from cheap rival producers China and India.

In Thailand, where 12 million tourists a year generate about 6 per cent of the country's gross domestic product of about \$160 billion, Nuchjarin Kasemsukworarat with SCB Securities said the disaster would do more damage to confidence than to output.

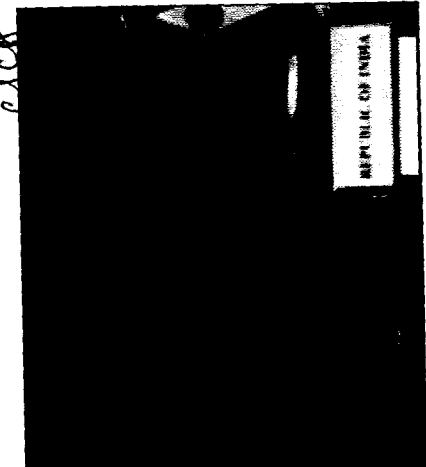
"I would say sentiment is hurt very badly," Nuchjarin said.



# India adopts Cica curb-terror catalogue

It asked the member states to exchange information concerning fight against terrorist, separatist, extremist activities and organised criminal groups and when necessary, develop mechanism to combat their activities. The meeting emphasised the centrality of the UN in promotion of international peace, favoured "independence and sovereignty" of Iraq, political and economic reconstruction in Afghanistan and expressed concern over situation in West Asia.

The meeting adopted a declaration saying that the threats posed by terrorism, separatism and extremism "undermine the very foundation of international peace and security" and stressed that the fight against these should be "global, comprehensive and sustained and not selective or discriminatory and should avoid applying double standards".



Mr K Natwar Singh addresses the Cica meet in Almaty on Friday. — PTI

said eliminating the menace through a "comprehensive and sustained effort" should be the "foremost common concern" for all nations.

Addressing the gathering, Mr K Natwar Singh, said India was committed to strengthening the global campaign against terrorism and underlined the need for all countries to "go beyond the old ideologies and ways of thinking." "The common threat to the security of our peoples and states is international terrorism. How we deal with it will affect our collective future," he told the meeting of 16-member grouping of Asian countries.

"Our foremost common concern should be to root out this menace through a comprehensive and sustained effort," Mr Singh said. The catalogue on CBMs included cooperation in military-political

ALMATY (Kazakhstan), Oct. 22. — Decriing "double standards" in dealing with terrorism, 17 Asian countries, including India, today asserted that the fight against the menace in all its forms and manifestations should be "comprehensive" and not "selective." The 17-member ministerial meeting of Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), attended by external affairs minister Mr K Natwar Singh among others, adopted a catalogue which prescribes cooperation among the member states in curbing terrorism and preventing separatist activities.

Describing terrorism as the common threat to all Asian countries, India today

# Almaty meet slams selective terror war

Vinod Sharma  
Almaty, October 22

THE TERRORIST threat to civil societies in Asia and across the globe was the dominant theme at the ministerial meeting here on Friday of the Confidence-Building Measures (CICA), which adopted a catalogue of CBMs, including measures to combat terror, strengthen confidence in the military-political sphere and push socio-economic bonding of member countries.

The catalogued CBMs were recommended in nature, meant to be applied on a gradual and voluntary basis. In the military-political sphere, the conference proposed an exchange of information on defence budgets, component of armed forces, military exercises and presence of foreign contingents on territories of CICA states. The document called for consultation mechanisms covering unexpected and hazardous military incidents — especially when they occurred in close proximity to the border areas of member countries.

Likewise, the catalogue contained information exchange on terror, separatism and organised crime and development mechanisms, when necessary to combat such activities. It underscored — in equal measure — cooperation to deal with proliferation of WMDs and their means of delivery, fighting drug-trafficking, money-laundering, organised transborder crime, human-trafficking and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Among the 17 CICA Foreign Minis-

ters at the meeting were India's K. Natwar Singh and Pakistan's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Makhdoom Khusró Bakhtyar.

In a declaration, the participants condemned terrorism — and violent separatism — in all its forms and manifestations. They said: "We have agreed to enhance our bilateral and multilateral efforts in fighting such threats, which undermine the very foundations of international peace and security".

In line with the Indian position, highlighted by Natwar Singh in his address, CICA declared that the fight against terror had to be global, comprehensive and sustained, not selective or discriminatory. In the context of dangers inherent in the proliferation of WMDs, the declaration advocated multilateral measures to prevent such weapons and their delivery systems from falling into the hands of terrorists and criminal groups.

"But international efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation should not affect the rights of states to access and use nuclear technology and materials for peaceful purposes in accordance with agreements with the IAEA", the CICA states explored.

On UN reforms, the member countries, being watched from the sidelines by observers from the US and the UN, decided to work together to make the system more responsive to traditional and new challenges. In addition to China and Russia, CICA members include Afghanistan, Iran, Israel, Palestine, Egypt and Turkey. Not surprising,



PTI

External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh at a ministerial meeting in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on Friday.

therefore, that the conference document pointedly referred to political and reconstruction processes in Afghanistan and Iraq, while dilating on West Asia and the Korean Peninsula. It identified multilateral and individual initiatives for dialogue between civilisations as one of

the principle instruments in fighting terror and intolerance to promote the peace among adherents of different religions and cultures.

Equally comprehensive were CICA's economic, environmental and human CBMs: A common database and a system of data exchange on trade and commerce, common environment protection programmes in the border areas, information exchange on tourism, suspicious financial transactions and natural and industrial disasters, besides promoting contact between scientific and educational institutions.

CICA

# Asians in agreement: Talks better than discords

led to intensify political dialogue and enhance mutual trust as also coordination on international and regional issues and work to create a "harmonious and stable" environment in the region.

"While recognising differences and seeking common ground, we will move forward hand-in-hand for a closer cooperation," the 13-point declaration said.

Indian foreign minister Mr K Natwar Singh led the Indian delegation for the ACD which was also attended by his Pakistani counterpart Mr. Yousaf Raza Gillani.

## Press Trust of India

QINGDAO (China), June 22. — Embarking on a new initiative, India, China, Pakistan and leaders from 19 other countries today agreed to move "hand-in-hand" to build a better Asia and pledged to resolve disputes among them through dialogue to preserve peace and security in the region.

In a five-page declaration on "Asia Cooperation" adopted at the end of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue here, they decided

to intensify political dialogue and enhance mutual trust as also coordination on international and regional issues and work to create a "harmonious and stable" environment in the region.

"While recognising differences and seeking common ground, we will move forward hand-in-hand for a closer cooperation," the 13-point declaration said.

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## Thaksin pushes own agenda

QINGDAO, June 22. — Thai Prime Minister Mr Thaksin Shinawatra today used the Asia Cooperation Dialogue to push for the nomination of his foreign minister as the next UN Secretary General.

Speaking at the ACD here, Mr Thaksin said it was time for an Asian to take the prestige position.

"If you ask on the part

of Thailand, I think, for Asia's sake, I may reluctantly have to sacrifice one of my most able Cabinet ministers, my foreign minister, to make himself available for the position," Mr Thaksin said. "It has been more than 35 years since the last Asian held the post of UN Secretary General," he added.

— Nation/ANN

The ACD nations pledged to make efforts to "expand and deepen" Asia

cooperation in all areas under the principles of equality, reciprocity, mutual benefit and gradual progress and to build a new Asia where lasting peace and prosperity prevails.

They decided to intensify political dialogue and enhance mutual trust besides stepping up economic cooperation and promoting the regional integration process.

While taking active part in the new round of WTO negotiations, they decided to "vigorously" develop intra-regional trade, promote investment activity

for bilateral and regional economic development and encourage regional trade arrangements.

To improve financial stability, particularly through the development of financial infrastructure, the declaration said the members decided to promote sustainable development of agriculture and to ensure food security and safety as well as to promote Asia's balanced development.

## Energy pact

The 22 member nations of the ACD — both oil pro-

ducers and consumers — issued a "Qingdao Initiative" on energy co-operation, pledging to stockpile strategic energy reserves and a regional energy transportation network, adds China Daily/ANN.

"This document will allow Asian countries to share challenges and successes so that all of them can benefit from the solutions," said Mr Han Wenke, deputy director of the Energy Research Institute with National Development and Reform Commission.

23 JUN 2004

THE STATESMAN

# Flu not in control: UN

*See also Hanoi*  
**Rome/Hanoi, Feb. 5** (Reuters): Three UN agencies admonished Asian countries infected with bird flu today for being too slow in sounding the alarm and warned that the epidemic, which has now killed 16 people, was still not under control.

The virus has ravaged poultry flocks in 10 countries and spread in China, home to the world's biggest poultry population. Authorities there said they faced a tough fight to defeat the disease and state television reported that the virus may now have spread to 13 of the country's 31 provinces.

South Korea reported its 19th outbreak, and Vietnam's Hospital for Tropical Diseases said tests showed that a 16-year-old girl from southern Soc Tran province had become the coun-

*Shan Asia*  
try's 11th bird flu victim. Thailand, which has reported five deaths, said it had two more suspected cases, a two-year-old boy and a 67-year-old man. It now has 19 suspected cases of infection by a virus believed to be spread by migrating birds.

Health experts say the human victims have caught the flu from sick chickens and the virus is not being passed between people, but there are fears the bird flu virus could combine with a human flu virus and mutate into a new infectious disease.

World health bodies said in a joint statement after a meeting

in Rome the chance the virus could spread to other countries, "including those in distant regions, is likely to remain high" unless the right methods were used to stamp it out.

The virus was not under control, said the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the world animal health body, OIE.

"Without the implementation of appropriate methods of disease control the risk of epidemic spread to further countries, including those in distant regions, is likely to remain high," it said.

FEB 6 2004

China reflects WHO urgency

# Bird flu 10 close ranks

29/1/04

103 104

**Bangkok, Jan. 28** (Reuters): The 10 Asian countries hit by the rapid spread of bird flu, which has killed at least eight people and threatens to develop into an epidemic worse than Sars, today promised to fight it together.

Details of what they agreed were sparse as their task loomed even larger now that the lethal virus has struck in China, the world's most populous country, the birthplace of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome and home to a vast poultry industry.

But the WHO said the one-day meeting in Bangkok, also attended by EU and US officials, was a good start. "This meeting is the beginning of the process. Quite clearly they're going to start to work together now," said WHO spokesperson Peter Cordingley, who described some delegates as clearly shaken by the rapid onslaught of the H5N1 avian flu virus.

Chinese President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao reflected the urgency displayed by the WHO which, with two other international organisations, has called for money and expertise to launch an all-out war on the bird flu virus. "Any epidemic must be

eradicated as soon as it occurs to prevent it from spreading," the Chinese leaders were quoted by state television as saying. "Such an epidemic must be contained in one spot and cut off to prevent it from infecting humans."

China is slaughtering poultry around three farms in three regions where bird flu was confirmed yesterday, the latest of the quick fire eruptions across Asia from Pakistan to Japan which the WHO says has no historical precedent.

The Bangkok statement said that was the right thing to do and "rapid culling" was the preferred solution to an outbreak, something Indonesia said it cannot do because it doesn't have the money to compensate farmers.

The statement promised a regional animal survey system to be plugged into the health network to make it easier to tackle diseases such as bird flu and Sars which leap the species barrier.

The great fear is that the H5N1 avian flu virus might mate with human influenza and unleash a pandemic among people with no immunity to it. So far, there is no evidence of transmission between people.

THE TELEGRAPH

29 JAN 2004

# Health fears return to haunt southeast Asia

## Alarm in Vietnam as three die of bird flu

**Hanoi, Jan. 13 (Reuters):** Asia faced a new health scare today after three Vietnamese died from "bird flu", but the WHO said there are no signs yet an outbreak that has ravaged the region's poultry industry is spreading between people.

"The evidence to date is that there is no sign of human-to-human transmission," Dr Shigeru Omi of the World Health Organisation said in a statement.

But he said the consequences would be dire if the virus latched on to the human influenza virus and spread among people, who have little immune protection against the strain.

"The ensuing virus would then be highly pathogenic and transmissible," said Omi, the WHO's regional director for the Western Pacific.

In a region already alarmed by the return of Sars, health officials say they are worried by the rapid spread of H5N1 avian influenza, or bird flu, in Japan, South Korea and Vietnam.

The Paris-based world animal disease body OIE said it would send scientists to Asia to investigate the outbreaks, which it said could pose a serious threat to humans under certain conditions.

The OIE group would start in Vietnam, where the WHO said tests conducted by a Hong Kong laboratory confirmed that bird



**An officer inspects chickens and ducks on sale at a market in Ho Chi Minh City. (AFP)**

flu killed one adult and two children from the Hanoi area.

They were among 14 people who fell ill with influenza in Hanoi and surrounding provinces. Eleven of the 13 children and the mother of one of the children died.

Omi said there was no evidence so far linking the remaining cases to the flu virus that has killed nearly one million chickens in Vietnam. But investigators are exploring the possibility

they were exposed to the same poultry.

The H5N1 avian flu virus spreads rapidly among poultry but rarely infects humans. Six people died in Hong Kong in 1997 during an outbreak of avian influenza and last year it infected a father and son in the crowded city.

Hanoi declared last week that it had been struck by a fast-spreading bird flu that has hit other countries in Asia, which has a vast poultry industry. South Korea, which has already culled nearly two million chickens and ducks, reported its first new case of avian flu in more than a week today, dashing hopes the outbreak was subsiding. Hundreds of people living in affected areas have been given blood tests, although a health official said today no one had shown symptoms of the disease.

In Japan, where the first bird flu outbreak in years was reported yesterday, the government vowed to protect consumers already worried about the safety of beef, fish and eggs.

Thailand, which produces about one billion chickens a year, said it was free of bird flu but was battling an outbreak of poultry cholera. "I would like to insist that Thailand is free of bird flu," Nirundorn Aungtragoonluk, director of the agriculture ministry's Livestock Disease Control Division, said.

**Beijing, Jan. 13 (Reuters):** China debunked rumours today that a sick man in the southern boomtown of Shenzhen was a possible Sars case, but a Hong Kong television report said one of two earlier suspected cases had been confirmed as having the deadly virus.

Shenzhen garment trader Chen Xiaohu, 38, had Sars-like symptoms a month ago, but doctors determined he was suffering from a form of bacterial pneumonia, Xinhua news agency said.

The Xinhua comment came as Asia faced a new health scare in bird flu, with the World Health Organisation (WHO) confirming that the disease had killed three people in Vietnam. Chen was put into intensive care on January 10 for "respiratory distress, coupled with other symptoms such as pneumonia, respiratory failure and failure of other organs in the chest", the agency said. His condition was now under control.

"Shenzhen City has strictly followed the requirements for reporting set by the World Health Organisation," Zhou Jun'an, head of the health bureau of Shenzhen City, was quoted as saying. "There has been no confirmed or suspected Sars case in Shenzhen since winter."

Shenzhen is a special economic zone surrounded by Guangdong and the former British colony of Hong Kong.

In Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong about 90 km northwest of Shenzhen, a 20-year-old waitress had been confirmed as having Sars, Hong Kong Cable Television said, the country's second confirmed case of the deadly disease in just over a

## China battles Sars report

The television station quoted sources from China's health ministry as saying a formal announcement would be made later.

Last week China confirmed its first Sars case since the WHO declared an end to the last outbreak in July. That victim has

now recovered and left hospital. Yesterday, China reported a third suspected case of Sars in a 35-year-old investor in Guangzhou.

WHO researchers in Guangdong, working with the health ministry, are examining all possible sources of Sars infection —

animals, humans and the environment. The government has ordered a cull of civets — weasel-like animals that are a local delicacy and the prime suspect — in hopes of averting an outbreak.

The virus first emerged in Guangdong late in 2002 and went on to infect more than 8,000 people in nearly 30 countries, killing nearly 800.

Singapore will start taking the temperature of school students this week to guard against a fresh outbreak of the deadly respiratory illness, the government said yesterday.