#### 4 killed in Calcutta clashes

NEW DELHI, Mar 12: Maoist activists clashed with Marxist marchers near Calcutta, leaving at least four people dead and several others injured, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported Monday, states

Among the dead was a country leader of the Communist Party of India (Marxist). PTI said, adding that the violence flared Sunday when Maoist activists who subscribe to violent revolution attacked a political rally of moderate Marxists in the village of Para-

The CPI administers West Bengal state of which Calcutta is the capital.

#### Thai Junta to form parliament next week

BANGKOK, Mar 12: A military-dominated national assembly will next week replace the civilian parliament that was dissolved in a coup d'etat last month, a Thai army spokesman said Monday, reports AFP.

The Junta will name some 200 to 300 people, mostly soldiers and some politicians of the deposed civilian government, to the parliament, the spokesman quoted Army Chief General Suchinda Kraprayoon as saying.

Gen. Suchinda was among the leaders of the February 23 coup that topped the civilian government of the Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan.

The selection process will remain secret until the announcement, expected to take place sometime next week, the spokesman said. Gen. Suchinda, believed to wield enormous in- fluence, has said the presence of soldiers in National Assembly would serve to maintain political stability in a period of uncertainty following the coup.

The National Assembly is charged with appointing a committee to draft a new constitution.

Is democracy coming? reports AP.

## Saddam briefed on latest developments

# Iraqi city Irbil falls to rebels, government-in-exile shortly

NICOSIA, Mar 12: Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, his army routed and his rule challenged by rebellion, chaired a meeting on Monday of his Revolution Command Council (RCC) and ruling Baath Party. state radio Baghdad said. reports Reuter.

The radio, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), said the joint meeting heard a report submitted by RCC Vice-Chairman Izzat Ibrahim on a tour of the governorates of Wasit and Maysan.

The two areas are said by travellers, Iraqi exiles and western intelligence reports to be scene of heavy fighting between forces loyal to Saddam and Muslim Shi'ites who want to set up an Iranian-style Islamic state in Iraq.

Iran, Iraq's enemy in a 1980-88 war, is overwhelmingly Shi'ite.

There have also been reports of heavy fighting in the northeast of the country pitting troops against Kurdish rebels who for years have sought autonomy for their non-Arab community.

Iraq's official media has yet to make any direct mention of the fighting, which erupted at the end of the six-week Gulf war 12 days ago.

The (Ibrahim's) report also reviewed the action taken during the tour to complete the tasks of restoring the normal state of affairs and the usual services," the radio said without giving details.

He said the RCC and the Baath leadership - Iraq's highest authorities -also reviewed "developments in the political" situation.

Another report from Diyarbakir adds:

Kurdish rebels captured the northern Iraqi city of Irbil after flerce battles with troops loyal to President Saddam Hussein, Kurdish exiles said on Monday.

"Irbil is now totally under the control of Peshmergas (Kurdish guerillas)" said Haji Salih Hussein, a leader of Iraqi Kurdish refugees in this

Iraq:

Syria

\*Jordan

Sunni area

Kurdish area

100 miles

160 km

Allied controlled area

Shilte area

**Turkey** 

Mosul 2

BAGHDAD

Saudi Arabia

Piver Tionis

southeastern Turkish city. He told Reuter he had received the information by telephone from the Iran-based headquarters of 17 anti-Sad-

dam Kurdish groups linked in an Iraqi opposition front. In Damascus, a spokesman for the National Kurdish Union said rebels won control of Ir-

bil, nearly 300 km(200 miles)

north of Baghdad, on Monday

morning. lie said Saddam's troops used helicopters and artillery against Kurds in the city but the situation is now quiet and the rebels are in full control.

The Kurdish exile claims could not be independently

Ethnic breakdown

Religious breakdown

Shiite Muslims 53.5%

Iran

Sunni Muslims

**HAB**asra

Christians

Yazidies

Nasiriyah

Arabs

Kurds

Turkmen

Others

confirmed. AP from Beirut says: Iraqi

73.5%

21.6%

41.5%

3.6%

1.4%

11-day-old insurrection inside About 325 opposition figures from 23 factions, includ-

ing Communists, Arab nationalists and Shi'ite Muslim fundamentalists, began a three-day conference in Beirut to plot Saddam's overthrow. Opposition members also

opposition leaders on Monday

urged religious leaders around

the world to demand that Sad-

dam Hussein's forces stop

"massacring" rebels waging an

agreed on that a "democratic, federal Iraq" should be created after Saddam's fall, Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, said late Monday. Conference also planned to

discuss "creating an Iraqi parliament-in-exile and government-in-exile," said Ali al-Adib, politburo member of the Shi'ite Muslims Dawa, or Call

Al-Adib said the conferees "hope to achieve total solidarity among the Iraqi opposition factions to face the tyrant Saddam."

The rebellion began in the southern Iraqi city of Basra March 1 after Saddam's army had been defeated by a US-led coalition that freed Kuwait.

Rebels claim they are about to take control of northern Iraqi oilfields, but say Saddam's troops are "massacring" rebels and civilians in the holy city of Karbala. Shi'ite Muslim leader Aya-

tollah Taqi al-Mudarressi, speaking to reporters as the Iraqi rebels gathered at the heavily guarded Bristol Hotel in west Beirut, said he had asked for foreign religious intervention to help stop the

"I have sent letters to the world's religious leaders, including the Pope, to prevent Saddam's criminal regime from massacring the Iraqi people," he said, adding that there is a "strong possibility that Saddam would use chemical weapons to quell the uprising in Karbala and other parts

Saddam used chemical weapons against a Kurdish uprising in northern Iraq in the 1988. The United States has said his chemical capability is believed to have been largely destroyed in the Gulf war.

Al-Mudarressi, spiritual leader of the Shi'ite Islamic Labour Organisation, said that because Karbala is a holy city, "It is the responsibility of the world's religious leaders to

AFP from Riyadh writes: Some 500 Iraqi prisoners of war due to be repatriated Monday were taken to the transfer point near the Iraq-Kuwait border but Iraq refused to take them, a Saudi military official said in Riyadh.

Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Mohammed Rashid said the Iraqi POWs would be held at a site near the border for two or three days until they were either accepted by Iraq or returned to Saudi custody.

Lt. Col Rashid also said that a further meeting between Iraqi military officials and representatives of the allied coali tion and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) concerning the Iraqi POWs had been scheduled to take place in 10 days.

The delay is from the Iraqi side, he said, adding that if it was for logistical and other reasons he did not know.

skeptical 8-year-old, reports AP.

asked, "Are

you really the

"Yeah

Yeah. Didn't

you know

that?" said a

nonplussed

Bush. What

did you think

I was - a pre-

tending guy?"

heck, how can

I prove that to

The presi-

" W e 11.

president?"

#### Fahd stresses peaceful Haj

RIYADH Mar 12 : The Ministry of Pilgrimage and **Endowments** has emphasised the keen interest of the Kingdom of Saudt Arabia, as per the directives of custodian of the two holy mosques, King Fahd fbn Abdul Aziz and Crown Prince Abdullah ibn Abdul Aziz, that every pilgrim would perform Haj rituals in peace and security, reports SPA.

Prefacing a booklet issued by the Ministry of Regulations and Rules of Pilgrims Housing, The ministry said the Kingdom of Saudt Arabia's which has been honoured by the Almighty God to serve the two holy mosques and pilgrims, will spare no effort for rendering the best services and facilities in the framework of a general plan - being designed by the ministry every year for the arrangements and their smooth implementation.

In line with the above mentioned facts, a paramount order had been issued on regulation pertaining to housing of pilgrims based on the ministerial resolution.

The Ministry of Pilgrimage and Endowments said the rules and regulations shall be a duty-bound to all concerned parties and Twafa establishments and they will be at disposal of all pilgrimage mis-

The ministry expressed hope that all concerned bodies would cooperate to provide maximum comfort to all pil-

#### 11,000 more Jews being settled in Palestine

TEL AVIV, Mar 12: Israel, running the risk of more anger in Washington, has launched a programme to house at least 11,000 immigrants in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, a Housing Ministry report says, states Reuter.

A copy of the document was passed to Reuters by opposition Members of Parliament fighting government plans to more than double the Jewish population of the occupied ar-

#### Where's govt, ask Kuwaitis: How come there's no electricity? Why hasn't the emir returned ?

As the euphoria of liberation subsides, Kuwaitis are growing restless for a return to normalcy and some feel the government has been slow and ineffective in addressing issues both mundane and fundamental.

"The government hasn't done anything. We can't rely on them," Hussan Al-Mazeedi, a 33-year-old public relations official, said as he stood in a lengthy bread line with his young son. "They had months to prepare for this (liberation) and now nothing is being done."

Kuwait's government faces a Herculean task. Iraqi soldiers did their best to destroy the country's modern, sophisticated infrastructure - from oil wells to electricity plants to the telephone system.

Iraqi envoy seeks asylum: Iraq's Ambassador in Madrid has applied for political asylum in Spain and gone into hiding, the ABC newspaper reported Tuesday, says Reuter.

Arshad Tawfiq made the request last weekend, the newspaper said, citing unidentified sources. The Spanish government was protecting Tawfiq against possible attacks from Iraqi groups loyal to President Saddam Hussein it said. Officials at the Foreign Ministry and at the Iraqi Embassy

could not be reached immediately for comment. Tawfiq had been a vocal exponent of Baghdad's stand after Iraq invades Kuwait on August 2 and harshly criticised Spain for joining the US led coalition that forced Iraq's army out of the emirate last month.

#### No stake in politics: Schwarzkopf: Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, who was overall commander of Operation Desert Storm, said he has no political aspirations, reports Reuter.

I have never considered any political aspirations (and) at the present time I am certainly not thinking about anything of that nature, the General said on NBC's Tuesday show.

Schwarzkopf in the interview taped Sunday in Saudi Arabia, said the turmoil in Iraq did not surprise him due to the lraqis' long term dissatisfaction with the leadership of President Saddam Hussein.

Confce on Asian refugees: Australia, Britain and Canada have called an international conference in Geneva this Canada discuss the plight of Asia's thousands of Vietnamese refugees, the foreign office said on Monday,

reports Reuter. A foreign office spokesman said the meeting would take place on march 25 and 26 in Geneva.

Senior officials from 11 other nations have been invited to discuss setting up a steering committee to help solve issues relating to the Vietnamese boat-people.

"The UK policy has not changed. Those who are not refugees can have no hope of settlement and will return to Vietnam," the spokesman said.

Israeli troops kill 6 Arabs: Israeli troops shot dead six Arab gunmen attempting across-border raid from Jordan Monday, hours before US Secretary of State James Baker was due in Israel, Israel radio said, reports Reuter.

Three Israeli soldiers were wounded in the dawn clash east of Tirat ZVI farming collective in the Jordan valley, the radio said.

Security forces are on alert for possible attacks by Palestinian Nationalist during Baker's tow-day visit to discuss Middle East peace prospects with Israeli leaders.

Malaysians win Quran Contest: Malaysia won in both the men's and women's sections of the 32nd annual International Quran Reading Competition Monday night, reports AP.

Mohamad Yusof was judged winner of the men's section. He had 86.8 points. Brunei's Awang Mohamed Yusof Abu Bakar was second with 85 points, and Indonesia's Muarrif Abbas third with 84.8, in the men's section, the National News Agency Bernama reported.

In the women's section, Faridah Mat Saman obtained 89.5 points to retain the title. Thailands' Fatimah Madeyan was second with 86 points while Indonesia's Siti Marlina Muaarif came in third with 85.3 points.

### Rebels holed up in Karbala mosques

Kuwait

### Ramadan killed by guards when he opened fire on Saddam?

NICOSIA, Mar 12 : Baghdad's state-run newspapers reported Monday that Saddam's closest aides are touring the trouble-torn provinces seeking to rally the military, the ruling Baath Party apparatus and civilians against what they portray as a US-Israeli conspiracy to topple the gov-

ernment, reports AP. Until now, the official Iraqi media has barely mentioned the insurrections beyond terse references to "trouble-makers."

Izzat Ibrahim, deputy chairman of the ruling Revolutionary Command Council led by Saddam: Taha Yassin Ramadan, a council member and first deputy premier; and Interior Minister Gen. Ali Hassan al-Majid, a cousin of Saddam and one of his most ruthless lieutenants, all called on official and troops "to redouble their efforts to confront the challenges from the enemies of Iraq...and rally behind the holy warrior Saddam Hussein."

Bayan Jabr of the Shiite Supreme Assembly for the Islamic Revolution in Iran claimed in Damascus that Ramadan was killed by Saddam's bodyguards when he shot the Iraqi dictator in the right hand in an assassination attempt.

Jabr did not say when the alleged slaying took place. But I mendation to dissolve the leg-

he said in a statement: "An Iraqi intelligence major who was captured in Basra yesterday asserted that he carried Ramadan's body in his arms."

He said Ramadan blamed Saddam for the death of relatives killed along with hundreds of other civilians in a Baghdad bomb shelter hit by US missiles Feb. 13 The Americans said the complex was a military command bunker.

Saddam put Majid in charge of combatting the unrest last week. Majid is known as "the butcher of the Kurds" for leading a military campaign against them three

years ago, killing thousands in poison gas attacks. He was also governor of Kuwait during lraq's 7-month occupation.

The Kurds have battled for years seeking autonomy for their mountainous home-

Iraq's Shiites make up about 20 per cent of the country's 17 million population. The Shiites, who live mainly in the south, form a 55 per cent majority.

Saddam's ruling elite is overwhelmingly Sunni Muslim, a sect which totals about 40 per cent of Iraq's people, including most Kurds. Meanwhile, Shiite Muslim

rebels were holed up in mosques in the holy city of Karbala under shelling and tank and artillery fire from President Saddam Hussein's troops, opposition leaders reported Monday.

They said that diehard fighters as well as civilians trapped in the crossfire were being slaughtered in the bombardment and that 500 have been killed or wounded since Friday.

Official sources in Baghdad claimed Republican Guard troops have reestablished control of the city, 100 miles (160 kilometers) south of the Iraqi capital, after several days of flerce

was ousted after five years in

office. He was replaced by V. P.

Singh, who resigned after 11

months and was succeeded by

Chandra Shekhar in November.

election until next November

appeared to flounder when

Chandra Shekhar said he

would only suspend his resig-

nation with the approval of the

opposition parties. The move

The Lok Sabha, the law-

Another bill extended fed-

By prior agreement, there

The Punjab issue must be

AFP adds: The Indian oppo-

sition Monday again called for

fresh elections to federal par-

One suggestion to delay the

#### you?" Bush asked. dent pulled out a black

wallet and started dig-There's my driver's license. Can you read what that says? B-U-S-H," said Bush, who had come to the school to honor the Marines who tutor Anthony and other Barcroft pupils.

Off the Record

**Bush produces ID card** 

to prove he's President

driver's license and a credit card Monday to prove his identity to a

Anthony Henderson in the Barcroft Elementary School library.

with a retinue of Secret Service agents and White House aides and

ARLINGTON (Virginia): Pre-sident George Bush pulled out his

Bush, for several minutes, had read some schoolwork aloud to

Then the boy looked at the man who had swept into the school

"Bush, George," the boy read. "George Herbert," the president added. "So you are the president," the youngster said.

"Are you sure?" the president parried. "Because I might have some other evidence." He fished out a picture of a grandson playing baseball and a

snapshot of a granddaughter. "How about, do you accept American Express cards?" said Bush, brandishing his green credit card while the Marines and

other grown-ups in the room broke out laughing. "I'll tell you how I can prove it. There's a great big black limousine car out there," said Bush.

Then he thought of something else. An aide darted up with a wad of pre-signed autograph cards with the presidential seal. 'Oh, here's a way to do it. That's an autograph card. You can

take it home to your mom," said the president. "The thatcher said we can't take autographs," announced Anthony.

"Don't tell her I gave it to you," replied Bush . He distributed cards to the other seven children, each of whom had a Marine tutor from Henderson Hall, the US Marine Corps Headquarters battalion, which "adopted" Barcroft Elementary School eight years ago.

Bush made the brief foray into Virginia to honor the Marine volunteers as his 400th daily Point of Light. Thirty Marines visit the school each week to work individually with students like Anthony. Later, Bush told a crowded school assembly that their "Marine Buddies" are heroes, just like the Marines who helped liberate

A reporter asked Anthony just who he thought Bush was. "A different person. Make-believe," the boy replied.

#### Maggie yet to adjust to shock of exit

NEW YORK: Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher says she hasn't adjusted to the "shock" of leaving office, reports AP. "Even now, when we're driving down Whitehall toward

Westminster or to go home, which is not very far away, all of a sudden my mind still thinks, Well, turn into Downing Street. 'And then I realize we're not going to," she told Barbara Walters in a "20-20" interview to be aired Friday night.

"The telephone goes and immediately you think, 'Oh, goodness me, the United Nations is sitting... And then you realize that it's no longer you anymore, said Mrs. Thatcher. "I remember hearing when the tanks had gone into Vilnius. I kind of leapt up and dialed the telephone. Then I realized it was no longer me any more."

# Lok Sabha clears way for possible polls

NEW DELHI, Mar 12: Parliament rushed through an emergency budget and other urgent business Monday to clear the way for possible elections caused by Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar's resignation, reports AP.

President Ramaswamy Venkataraman was expected to announce a decision soon on Chandra Shekhar's recom-

islature and call a national vote. Publicly, all major parties have said an election was unavoidable, but hectic moves were afoot to patch up differences between the prime minister's Janata Dal-Socialist Party and its main backer, the Congress Party of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

An election could be held as carly as May, just 18 months after the last vote when Gandhi



KUWAIT CITY: A veiled Kuwaiti woman holds up an American flag 11 Mar as she and hundreds of others join in the daily sunset ritual of celebrating the two week old liberation of - AFP/UNB photo liament. Kuwait in front of the US Embassy