

**BRIEFLY**

**Afghan troops kill 400 rebels:** The Soviet-backed Afghan authorities said on Friday government troops killed 400 rebels and captured their base in the eastern province of Logar. Reuter reports from Islamabad.

They also seized tanks and rockets from radical guerilla leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-1-Islami party base in Logar's Tangi Waghjan region, the official Kabul radio said.

The broadcast, monitored in the Pakistan capital Islamabad, said a number of Pakistani soldiers helping the rebels were among those killed in the operation which it said began on Monday.

**Velayati meets Fahd:** Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati, on a landmark visit to Saudi Arabia, met King Fahd in Jeddah on Friday, the official Saudi Press Agency reported in Nicosia. Reuter reports.

The SPA report, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation, gave no details of the discussions.

Velayati arrived in Jeddah on Thursday, the first visit by a top Iranian official since the two countries resumed ties last month.

Saudi Arabia and Iran, both major oil producers, are spiritual leaders of Islam's two main branches—Sunnis and Sh'ites.

**Baker's mother dead:** Nonner Means Baker, mother of US Secretary of State James Baker, died early Friday in Houston after an apparent heart attack. She was 96, AFP reports from Houston.

Mrs Baker apparently suffered a heart attack at her home and was taken to Methodist Hospital, where she was pronounced dead on arrival.

Baker rushed back to Houston Friday morning, breaking off his Middle East Peace Mission after hearing of her death.

**Carmine Coppola dead:** Carmine Coppola, the father of director Francis Ford Coppola and the Oscar-winning composer of 'The Godfather Part II' movie score, died from a stroke, a publicist said. He was 80, AP reports from Los Angeles.

Coppola, whose other children include actress Talia Shire, died Friday at Northridge Hospital Medical Center, spokesman Mark Gill said.

Coppola and Nino Rota won an Academy Award in 1974 for the best original dramatic score for 'The Godfather Part II.' Coppola also conducted Broadway musicals, including 'Kismet' and 'Once Upon a Mattress.'

He studied flute and composition at the Juilliard School of Music, then went on to played first flute with the Detroit Symphony. He later played with Arturo Toscanini in the NBC Symphony.

**UN to probe Iran-Iraq border incident:** The United Nations said Friday it has agreed to investigate border incidents between Iran and Iraq and to help resolve them. AFP reports from New York.

UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar has decided to open offices in Baghdad and Teheran with civilian personnel of the United Nations and a small number of military observers, a UN press office statement said.

The offices would be established "for the purpose of investigating and helping resolve any difficulties of a military nature which may arise on the border," said Nadia Younes, a spokeswoman for Perez de Cuellar.

**11 rebels killed in Sri Lanka:** Government troops shot and killed 11 Tamil separatists in two separate attacks in northeastern Sri Lanka, military officials said Saturday in Colombo, AP reports.

At least two soldiers were killed in a land mine explosion. The officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said troops shot and killed eight rebels at Panarua village in northeastern Trincomalee district on Friday.

Three more rebels were killed when they tried to escape soldiers at Sambarativu village, also in Trincomalee on Friday.

Two soldiers were killed when they stepped on an anti-personnel mine at Weligama village in Trincomalee, officials added. At least five soldiers were wounded in the incident on Friday.

**Mulroney to visit Japan, HK:** Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney will visit Japan and Hong Kong next month to strengthen economic ties with the region, his office announced on Friday in Ottawa, reports Reuter.

The Prime Minister will visit Hong Kong from May 22-26 and then head for Japan from May 26-31 at the invitation of Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu.

The visit will provide an opportunity to build on an already strong bilateral relationship between Canada and Japan," Mulroney's office said in a statement.

**Prosecutor-General to lead 1,10,000 Iranian pilgrims**

TEHERAN, Apr 27: Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Friday named the country's Prosecutor-General to lead 110,000 Iranians on the annual Haj pilgrimage to Mecca. Reuter reports from Tehran.

The decree appointing Mohammad Mohammedi Reyshahri, a former Minister of Intelligence in charge of internal security, was announced on Teheran Radio.

A headline newspaper suggested Saudi pressure had forced the resignation of Khamenei's first choice for the job Ahmad Khomeini, son of Iraq's late supreme leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Iranians will take part in the June pilgrimage after Teheran and Riyadh last month healed a rift caused in part by bloodshed in the holy city of Mecca during the 1987 Haj more than 400 people, mostly Iranians were killed in clashes with Saudi Security forces during an Iranian led demonstration.

Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati is visiting Saudi Arabia. His discussion include arrangements for Iranian partic-

**Male and female students barred from riding same motorcycle**

KUALA LUMPUR, Apr 27: A Malaysian University is prohibiting male and female students from riding the same motorcycle on its campus to discourage body contact, a newspaper reported Saturday, reports AFP.

'Frightened Kurds won't be abandoned'  
**Only terror keeping Saddam in power, says Bush**

NICOSIA, Apr 27: US President George Bush has promised he will not abandon the frightened Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq for whom his troops are creating "safe havens", reports Reuter.

US soldiers are constructing new camps inside Iraq without Baghdad's consent. Bush said on Friday "troops will stay there as long as it takes to make sure these refugees are being taken care of, and not a minute longer".

The United Nations announced it was sending its first convoy of relief aid to Zakho, the northern Iraq town where a post-Gulf War drama is being played out over the fate of almost two million refugees.

Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said the UN expected to take over the camps within days, as Iraq has asked.

But the world body has no clear instructions from the Security Council because China, which holds a veto, is reluctant to endorse the pres-

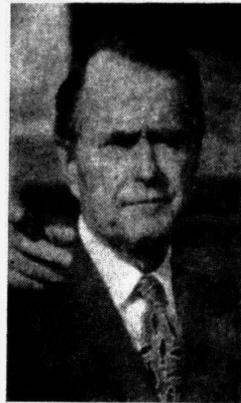
ence of US and allied troops. Diplomats at UN headquarters in New York were sceptical that Perez de Cuellar's timetable could be met.

Saddam, who six weeks ago seemed unlikely to survive long after his army was driven from Kuwait, strengthened his hand this week by negotiating an autonomy pact with leaders of the Kurds' catastrophic post-war revolt.

The Kurds want the UN to guarantee their deal with Saddam. Bush however renewed his calls for Saddam's overthrow.

"It's only terror that keeping him in power" he said. Reuter correspondents who visited Zakho on Friday saw a half-empty town in which the next car up the sun-baked street might carry US or British Marines, Saddam's security police, or Kurdish peshmerga guerrillas.

Refugees, thousands of whom died after fleeing in terror from Saddam's army, are mostly waiting to see which



Bush

way the political wind blows before taking their chances back in Iraq.

"They wait for things to be settled. When they think this is so they will come back," said

Fouad, a farm worker in Zakho whose family is still in the mountains.

The Americans chose a green valley between Zakho and the Turkish border as their "safe haven" site for Kurda this month, ordered out Saddam's army and, later, his heavily armed police.

By Friday all but a token force of uniformed Iraqis were gone, but wary residents said plain clothes police had moved in.

Townfolk spoke to strangers in whispers and avoided being seen doing it. They asked reporters not to publish their full names.

"They (secret police) are dressed like I am, in civilian clothes," a 36-year-old teacher told Reuter correspondent.

"They are like the others. They watch us in the street and carry pistols hidden inside their shirts. We are afraid".

A Kurdish driver stopped beside visiting reporters, pointed to another car cruising

nearby and hissed: "police, police".

"We are very happy the American, British and French are here. They will protect us," said another young Kurd.

Zakho mayor Daoud Hassan Sulciman, whose administration continues to operate despite the western military presence, told reporters five policemen were wounded on Thursday night in a guerrilla attack on the local police station.

"The terrorists would not have done this if the Americans had not been here", he said.

**30 killed in US tornados**

ANDOVER (Kansas), Apr 27: At least 30 people were killed in tornados that whipped across the midwestern states of Kansas and Oklahoma on Friday, leaving a swathe of havoc in their wake local authorities said, reports AFP.

Of the dead, 22 were in the small town of Andover where 500 homes including many caravans on a permanent site were wrecked, according to mayor Jack Finelson. He said a 13-year-old girl in the town had been hurled 130 meters (400 feet) into a tree.

Kansas Governor Joan Finney has instructed the national guard and the state police to take part in relief operations and law and order maintenance in the region around Wichita. Andover, a town of some 5,000 inhabitants lies 32 kilometers (20 miles) east of Wichita.

Perez de Cuellar said that about 416,000 people were assumed to be in Turkey, most of them near the Iraqi border, and another 200,000 to 400,000 are believed to be fleeing their homes in the Kurdish ar-

**1.8m Iraqis flee homes: Perez**

UNITED NATIONS, Apr 27: Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar estimated on Friday that up to 1.8 million Iraqis were displaced from their homes, inside the country or in Iran and Turkey, Reuter reports.

In a report to the security council, he said the latest figures showed more than one million refugees were in Iran.

These people are presumed to be mainly Shi'ite Muslims or Kurds involved in uprisings against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein at the end of the Gulf war.

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**6 Blacks killed in South Africa**

JOHANNESBURG, Apr 27: Six black people have been killed in fresh political violence in South Africa, police said Saturday, reports Reuter.

A woman's bullet-riddled corpse was found near a migrant worker hostel in Johannesburg's Soweto township, police said in a report on unrest in the previous 24 hours.

Unidentified gunmen shot dead two men and three other men were stabbed and hacked to death in incidents near Durban and Pietermaritzburg in troubled Natal province.

Seven people who were wounded included three police officers who came under fire while patrolling near Durban and Cape town.

The townships and hill villages of Natal and the industrial hostels around Johannesburg have been the scene of bitter fighting between the African National Congress (ANC) and rivals loyal to the Inkatha freedom party.

"Regrettably, until now, the response to the appeals that have been launched as been very modest, especially for activities inside Iraq," he told the council.

are waging bloody separatist campaigns. In Assam, militants have temporarily suspended an anti-Indian insurgency in the oil-rich northeastern state where New Delhi imposed direct Federal rule last November. Army troops deployed at the time are now on stand down.

Mr. Bhargava said 640 companies of Federal paramilitary strike troops would begin moving Saturday and contingents would be made available to all states from May 10 to guard against pre-poll trouble.

The same troopers would be "rolled" from state to state during the three-day balloting to ensure an adequate presence during polling, the Home Secretary, who is in charge of Indian security, aid, adding that by rotating them the total manpower availability would double.

32,000 Indians file nomination papers

NEW DELHI, Apr 27: Some 32,000 Indians have filed papers for election to Federal Parliament and eight provincial legislatures, and scrutiny of the nominations begins Saturday, reports AFP.

Election Commission officials here said nearly 12,000 of the nominations were for the Lok Sabha, or Federal Parliament's lower house, which was dissolved a week after Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar resigned March 6.

"We confirm receiving 11,792 nominations until late last night, and our office is still getting reports (from the states)," an official said here, adding that the final tally would be known later Saturday.

More than 7,500 candidates scrambled in Friday, the last day of nomination, the official said.

Newspapers said at least 20,000 others had filed papers to fight polls to legislatures in the seven states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Haryana, Punjab and Assam, and the Federal Territory of Pondicherry.

**Troops to be deployed in polls**

**No more govt with Congress of anti-socials: Jyoti**

CALCUTTA, Apr 27: The West Bengal Chief Minister, Mr. Jyoti Basu claimed here yesterday that the left front would "return to power" for the fourth consecutive term winning the May 20 election to the 294-member State Assembly, reports PTI.

Formally launching the Left Front election campaign for the assembly and Lok Sabha polls from his Satgacia Assembly constituency in south 24-Parganas district Mr Basu said "right now I am not able to say whether the Congress-I would get 30 or 40 seats out of the 294 seats but it is certain we are returning to power."

Describing as "barbaric rule" of the Congress-I in the early seventies when Mr Siddhartha Sankar Ray was the Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mr Basu asked "can the people of the state elect the Congress-I to power to form a government with the anti-socials".

Listing the achievements of the Left Front government during the last 14 years of its rule. Mr Basu said the return of the Congress-I to power would only result in jeopardising whatever the progress the state had made in various fields.

Obviously referring to the return of Mr S. S. Ray as the WBPC (I) chief, Mr Basu said even those Congressmen who had thought of getting back their big leader in the state Cong-I had already started realising what would be their fate in the coming polls.

AFP adds from Delhi: The Indian government revealed its security blueprint for next month's elections Friday, saying more than half of the constituencies where balloting would be held were violence prone.

New Delhi has also identified between 70 and 80 of the 537 constituencies as "extra sensitive" as has plans to counter Hindu-Muslim and caste violence there during the national and state polls on May 20, 23 and 26.

State police chiefs have been asked to coordinate with local military units and the Army would be deployed to aid civilian authorities during the three days of balloting if needed, Home Secretary Raj Kumar Bhargava said.

Flanked by the chiefs of paramilitary organisations, Mr. Bhargava said Federal forces were facing manpower problems because of large existing deployments in the strife-torn states of Punjab, Kashmir and Assam.

"We have forces locked up in three states and we cannot move them, so we have a manpower constraint," he said, referring to the scaled-down security plans for the May polls compared to the deployment of 750 companies (75,000 men) during the 1989 elections.

Thousands of Federal troopers are deployed in the two northern border provinces where Muslim and Sikh rebels

are waging bloody separatist campaigns. In Assam, militants have temporarily suspended an anti-Indian insurgency in the oil-rich northeastern state where New Delhi imposed direct Federal rule last November. Army troops deployed at the time are now on stand down.

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NEW DELHI: Indian veteran film Star Rajesh Khanna (C, wearing glasses) is mobbed Friday as he tries to file papers as a candidate for Rajiv Gandhi's Congress Party in next month's general elections. Khanna, who earned in sobriquet of the King of Passion for his acting, was attacked by blindmen opposing his plans to join politics. —AFP photo

**SAARC travel voucher to be launched**

CALCUTTA, Apr 27: KK Bhargava, Secretary General of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation said here Saturday that a special SAARC travel voucher would be launched from July next to liberalise travel facilities among the seven SAARC countries as part of their programme of development tourism.

Addressing a meeting at Bengal Chamber of Commerce, Bhargava said that the scheme, which had been finalised, would require no foreign exchange adding that meeting of the SAARC countries would be held in June at Kathmandu to give the seal of approval.

To promote trade and business cooperation between the SAARC countries, the Secretary General suggested that a SAARC chamber of commerce should be constituted

**Expulsion of Benazir's aide suspended**

PESHAWAR, Apr 27: Pakistan's Supreme Court suspended Saturday a special court order expelling a former Law Minister and key aide to Benazir Bhutto from Parliament for seven years, reports AFP.

Hearing Syed Iftikhar Hussain Gilani's appeal, the Supreme Court also stayed a Chief Election Commission order, declaring Gilani's parliamentary seat vacant after a tribunal found him guilty Wednesday of misappropriating government funds worth 120,000 dollars.

The special tribunal unseated Gilani, barred his entry into Parliament, declared him ineligible to contest any election for seven years and fined him two million rupees (about 90,000 dollars).

Gilani also served as Justice Minister during Ms Bhutto's 20-month premiership that ended on August 6, 1990, after President Ghulam Ishaq Khan sacked her on charges of corruption and misuse of power.

The court ordered the suspension of the tribunal's verdict until the appeal is decided. No date has been fixed for the next hearing.

Western correspondents who have visited Iraq's battle zones said the damage in the south outstrips anything seen in the Kurdish north.

Saddam will have to contend with growing demands for political reforms, the awesome task of rebuilding Iraq and its shattered economy, overcoming a humiliating peace treaty with the US-led coalition that liberated Kuwait and preventing the despair of many Iraqis from degenerating into hostility.

The televised hugs and kisses exchanged by Saddam and the Kurdish chieftains Wednesday in Baghdad cannot mask the deep hatred and distrust between them.

Saddam has history of making agreements when he's in a jam and tearing them up when he's in a position of strength.

**Saddam neutralises Kurdish rebels**

NICOSIA, Apr 27: Saddam Hussein appears to have neutralised Iraq's Kurdish rebels, a thorn in Baghdad's side for decades, in his drive to cling to power in the post-Gulf War turbulence that has swept his nation, reports AP.

But the country's majority Shi'ite Muslims, alienated by Saddam's ruthless suppression of their own ill-fated revolt, remain a potent threat he cannot afford to ignore.

A tentative agreement to give the Kurds the autonomy for which they have struggled for so many decades has given Saddam breathing space as he tries to hold his ravaged country together with himself at its head.

Yet big problems remain, apart from the festering hostility of the Shi'ites who make up 55 percent of Iraq's 17 million people. Their shrines in the southern cities of Karbala and Najaf were battered by the

army.

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**Off the Record**

**A British tribute to Satyajit**

LONDON: A dozen of the best films produced by Satyajit Ray would be screened on British television as a tribute to the great Indian film director and painter, writer and composer on his 70th birthday, reports PTI.

The films to be screened by channel four would include "Pather Panchali". A documentary about Satyajit Ray will also be shown.

**Saddam's birthday carnival**

BAGHDAD: Iraqi authorities are preparing all out public celebrations for President Saddam Hussein's 54th birthday Sunday, but this year the festivities will also mark his tenuous grip on power in the teeth of a western campaign to dislodge him, reports AFP.

Despite military defeat by the US-led international coalition and an economic crisis, the government and ruling Baath Party have scheduled a programme of "public rejoicing".

Events will range from concerts and exhibits to a parade by Baath militants and marchers from other national organizations.

Iraq usually marks Mr Hussein's birthday with a wide range of pomp. But this year as the date approaches newspapers are publishing telegrams of congratulations to Mr Hussein from the highest officials of his party and the government, describing them as "acts of allegiance."

And for the past few days the official media have fallen over themselves to sing the praises of Mr. Hussein, whose birthday the weekly Alef Baa hailed as marking the birth of the new Iraq.

**MP's seat no better than where I'm sitting'**

NEW DELHI: A former prostitute running one of New Delhi's sleazier brothels will contest next month's polls in a bid to jolt India out of its bureaucratic neglect of its prostitutes and their forgotten children, reports AFP.

The nomination by Nimmi Bai, the first prostitute to contest elections to India's Federal Parliament as an independent candidate, has sent ripples of disbelief thorough political circles.

"An MP's seat is no better than where I am sitting, but it opens a new world for us," said Ms Bai's last-minute poll manager Satra, a 23-year-old prostitute from the city's bustling red-light district, G. B. Road.

Ms Bai, who has worked in almost every major Indian city, is contesting from Delhi's moneyed Chandni Chowk constituency — a bastion of orthodox Hindu chauvinists who have voted for right-wing candidates in previous polls.

The ex-prostitute, arrested eight times during her 26-years in Delhi, paid 500 rupees (25 dollars) as poll deposit and registered herself as a candidate in one of the capital's seven seats.