

## BRIEFLY

## Quit Palestine: Gaddafi : Libyan

Leader Muammar Gaddafi has said the United Nations should be ready to use force to make Israel cede land for a Palestinian state, reports Reuters.

Welcoming North African leaders on Sunday night in the Libyan town of Ras Lanuf, Gaddafi called on the UN to be as tough with Israel as it was with Iraq.

"We now challenge those committed to international legality to begin implementing Resolution 181 of 1947," Gaddafi said, referring to an aborted UN plan which would have divided Palestine, then under British rule, into Jewish and Arab states.

## Egyptian troops to stay in Gulf :

The Egyptian soldiers who helped Allied troops force Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait will stay in the Gulf region to form the core of a joint Arab peacekeeping force, military sources said Sunday, reports AP.

The majority of the 38,500 Egyptian troops are presently in Kuwait, many in Kuwait City, where they are continuing their search for Iraqi stragglers. They are also based along the Kuwaiti-Saudi border.

The joint Arab force will replace US and other Western Allied forces presently monitoring the Gulf region.

The Egyptian soldiers will remain in Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, said the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

## 11 US missing soldiers : Eleven US

soldiers, members of the elite Green Berets which specialize in scouting and sabotage missions, are Missing in Action (MIA) in Iraq but not officially listed as such a newsweekly reports, says AFP.

Newsweek magazine says in its upcoming edition that the 11 soldiers were part of special operations forces that infiltrated Iraq to locate missile launchers, identify air targets and steal enemy equipment.

The Pentagon has reported 24 MIAs including 14 believed to have died in a plane crash, newsweek says the 11 Green Berets are not included in the 24.

## Red Cross convoy for Iraq : An 18-

truck Red Cross convoy of food, medicine and water treatment machinery left for Iraq Sunday as fears mounted of widespread disease and hunger in the war-ravaged nation, reports Reuters.

Relief officials said shortages had forced Iraqi hospitals to halve the amount of food served to thousands of Gulf war patients.

Werner Kaspar, head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) mission in Jordan, said he feared an outbreak of epidemics caused by Allied bomb damage to Iraq's sewage and water facilities.

"The ICRC continues to be very concerned about the health situation, the sanitary conditions and a growing lack of food among the most vulnerable groups in Iraq," Kaspar told Reuters.

## Rocard for new partnership :

French Prime Minister Michel Rocard said on Sunday the Gulf war had strengthened ties between the United States and France and called for a new partnership between the two nations, reports Reuters.

"Doubtless .... we have different priorities, concerns and commitments, but now here in the world can I see any real conflict between our respective interests," Rocard said in a speech prepared for the Franco-American foundation.

"I believe that Franco-American relations in the coming decade should be based on the idea of a new partnership," he said.

## Dalai Lama for new union :

The Dalai Lama urged Asian leaders to help to create a new union of democratic states in the continent — including China and his homeland, Tibet, reports Reuters.

The Tibetan Buddhist leader made the appeal in a statement marking the 32nd anniversary of the abortive uprising against Chinese rule that forced him to flee into exile in India.

Alleging continued Chinese repression of human rights in the Himalayan territory, the 1989 Nobel peace Laureate said he had faith that China would one day follow eastern Europe in moving toward parliamentary democracy.

## Sharon resigns from committee :

Israeli Housing Minister Ariel Sharon resigned from the Immigration Cabinet Committee on Sunday and accused the government of mishandling the massive influx of Soviet Jews to Israel, reports AP.

Sharon said he would retain his Cabinet position as Housing Minister, making his resignation a largely symbolic move.

Sharon criticized a lag in housing construction for the immigrants and a recent cut in living stipends for the newcomers, the reports added.

## Zardari allowed to cast vote

## Sharif's bid to mend fences with MQM

KARACHI, Mar 11: Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif met the leader of the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) Sunday in a bid to preserve the coalition government in Sindh province, reports AFP.

Emerging from nearly four hours of talks with Altaf Hussain, Sharif said: "The talks centred on bridging the Gulf between government and the MQM on all issues."

But Hussain, whose group speaks for Urdu-speaking settlers from India, stressed "Success of the deliberations would depend on the implementation of understanding by the Prime Minister."

Both leaders indicated that a serious rift had developed between the MQM and the Islamic Democratic Alliance IDA

which is led by Sharif.

It stems from MQM charges that government agencies were involved in an alleged conspiracy to destabilise the group and eliminate its leaders, including Hussain.

Sharif said he had no differences with the MQM.

Sunday's meeting followed the MQM's expulsion last week of Badar Iqbal, former Transport Minister in Sindh province, and 17 other central and zonal office holders.

MQM support is vital for the Sharif government to maintain its hold over southern Sindh province, the home and powerbase of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

Meanwhile Reuters reports: A Pakistani court ruled Sunday that opposition leader Benazir Bhutto's jailed husband could vote in elections on Thursday to the Senate, or upper house of Parliament.

Police said Asif Ali Zardari would be taken from a Karachi jail to Islamabad to attend an election meeting of the National Assembly, or lower house, to which he was elected while in prison.

Zardari, a businessman, was arrested in October, two months after President Ghulam Ishaq Khan sacked Benazir as Prime Minister on charges of abuse of power.

He faces charges including extortion and conspiracy to murder which carry a possible death sentence.



Nawaz Sharif

NICOSIA (Cyprus), Mar 11:

Kurdish guerrillas said Saddam Hussein's regime is crumbling as thousands of Iraqi soldiers join rebels forces which are threatening to storm the capital of oil-rich Kirkuk province in the north, reports AP.

"As many as 50,000 Iraqi soldiers have defected to the Kurdish side in the area of Haljoman to Khalifan," in north-eastern Iraq, said Barham Saleh, a senior official of the opposition Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

Heavy fighting was reported in the Kurdish north and in southern Iraq where loyalist troops are battling Shiite militants and army deserters. Opposition sources said thousands of people have been killed over the last week in fighting between Republican Guard loyalists and rebels.

Saleh said in many areas in the north, towns surrendered with little resistance. "Saddam's regime is literally crumbling," he said. "In the north, we're seeing whole battalions coming across to our side."

He said 29 battalions of Iraq's civilian militia had joined the rebels.

Opposition sources also said the Basra naval base garrison had switched sides and joined the rebels. They claimed a Major General and a Brigadier General had defected to the rebels in separate incidents, bringing their men with them.

There was no independent

confirmation of the reports on the rebellions.

The official Iraqi News Agency referred to the rebellion indirectly Sunday. It said newly appointed Interior Minister Ali Hasan-al-Majid traveled to northern Iraq and told officials and citizens to rally to "confront the enemies and traitors and defeat the plots of the United States and its evil Zionist allies."

INA, which did not say when the trip took place, claimed the people "expressed their love for and absolute loyalty to the struggling President Saddam Hussein."

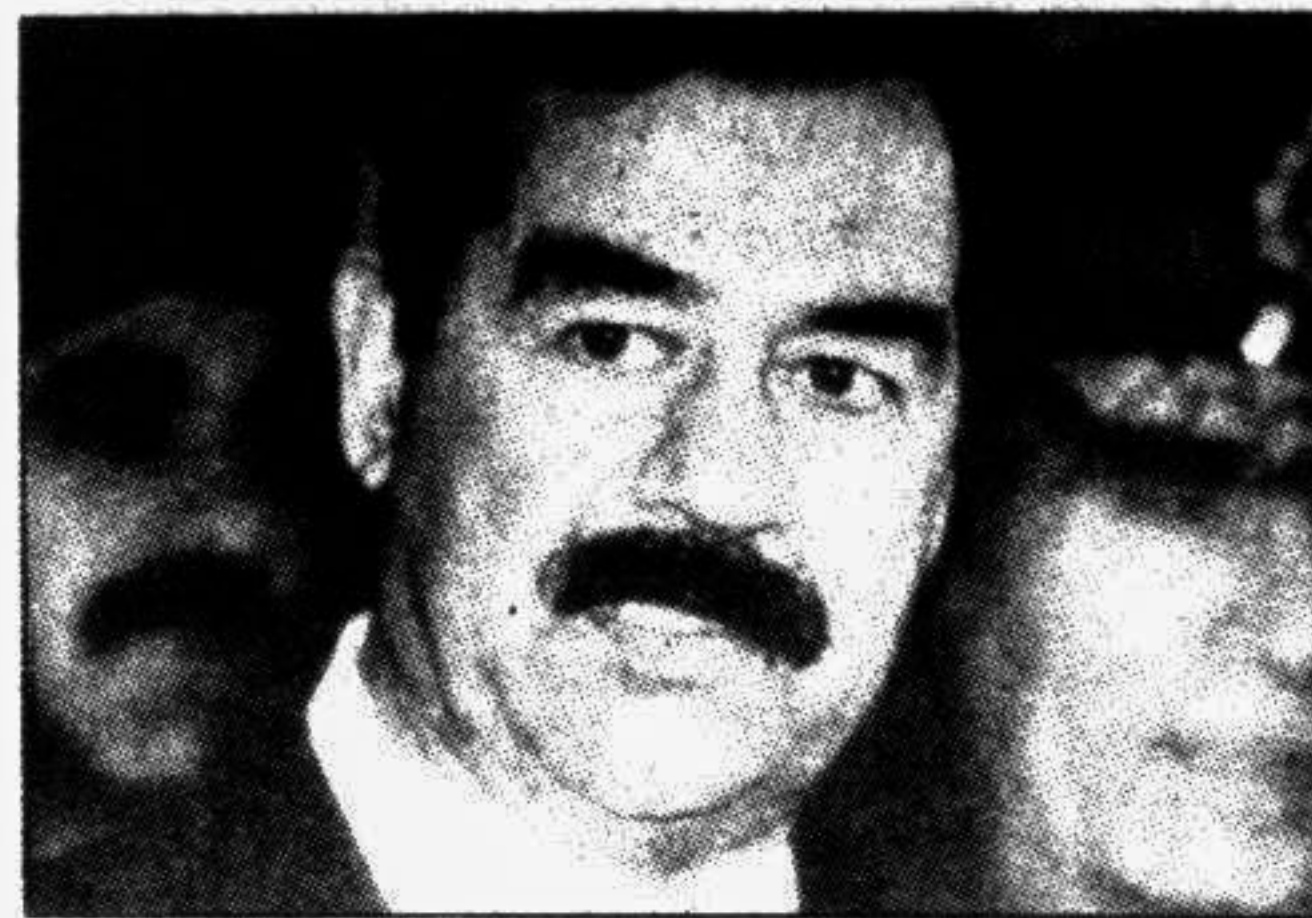
Meanwhile, the official Islamic Republic News Agency said Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani expressed concern Sunday that Iraq might deteriorate into civil war.

"We think it is necessary for the government and all domestic groups in Iraq to cooperate in order to prevent the country from falling to pieces," the agency quoted Rafsanjani as saying.

Tehran radio quoted an unidentified Iraqi opposition leader as saying that "Much of 29 cities and hundreds of towns are out of the hands of the Baathists." Saddam's ruling Baath Arab Socialist Party.

"This is almost three-fourths of Iraq," said the rebel leader quoted by the radio, monitored in Nicosia.

"The city of Kirkuk is on the brink of fall," said PUK



President Saddam Hossain : Uncertain days ahead

spokesman Beker Fattah in Tehran, according to IRNA.

However, Saleh said Kurdish forces were still several kilometers from Kirkuk, a city of more than 200,000 that is 120 miles (200 kilometers) north of Baghdad.

"I would be surprised if it were to fall without a fight," said Saleh, noting that it is vital to the regime because it is the center of Iraq's northern oilfields.

Those fields produced half of Iraq's 3-million-barrel daily oil output before the Gulf crisis erupted in August.

Fattah also claimed rebels had captured 80 per cent of Erbil province and 60 per cent of Kirkuk province just to the south.

The PUK and the Kurdish Democratic Party, the two main Kurdish movements long

opposed to Saddam, had an estimated 40,000-50,000 guerrillas before they launched their campaign in the mountainous north after the Shiite revolt in the south erupted March 1.

For decades, they have led the struggle for an autonomous homeland for Iraq's 3.5 million Kurds, who make up about 20 per cent of the country's 17 million population.

Another report adds: Kurdish guerrillas reported substantial gains in their rebellion against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, claiming thousands of his troops had joined their ranks and large portions of northern Iraq were under their control.

Fighting also reportedly flared in southern Iraq between Shiite militants and government loyalists.

The Kurdish guerrillas reported little resistance Sunday and said they were advancing on the key oil center of Kirkuk.

In southern Iraq, Shiite Muslim militants and army deserters were reportedly battling the Iraqi army, much of which was decimated during the Gulf War against the multinational coalition.

Other rebel claims carried by Iran's official media spoke of even greater victories. The reports said Kirkuk was on the brink of falling and that three-fourths of Iraq was now in the hands of guerrillas.

It was not possible to independently confirm the latest reports on the rebellions. Baghdad has heavily censored international media, and foreign reporters were expelled from the country Friday and Saturday.

Barham Saleh, a senior official in the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, a guerrilla group, told the Associated Press on Sunday: "In the north, we're seeing whole battalions coming across to our side." Speaking by telephone from London, he said: "Saddam's regime is literally crumbling."

Saleh said that as many as 50,000 Iraqi soldiers have defected to the Kurdish guerrillas in northeastern Iraq and that 29 battalions of Iraq's civilian militia had also joined the rebels.

Iraqi opposition sources and travelers from Iraq said Saturday that rioting against Saddam's rule was growing despite a crackdown of people in the past week.

A Cairo message adds: Supporters of Saddam Hussein are massacring Egyptian men, women and children in southern Iraq because of Egypt's participation in the alliance which forced Iraq out of Kuwait, two returnees said Sunday.

The two Egyptian men said their two families escaped from Basra in southern Iraq to Safwan in Kuwait and then to Cairo. They arrived Saturday night.

"Iraqi treatment of Egyptians has changed completely after they learned of the role Egyptian forces took in the battle for the liberation of Kuwait," Mo'taz Helmy Hamed told the government-run Middle East News Agency.

"Egyptians there are experiencing atrocities and terrible things," he said.

## 1 lakh Iranians to perform Haj this yr

MANAMA, Mar 11: Iran will participate in this summer's pilgrimage to Makkah, sending up to 100,000 pilgrims, Iranian Ambassador to Bahrain Javad Abadi, said in an interview published here, reports AFP.

The Bahraini weekly Al-Mawqaf quoted Abadi as saying: Iran's relations with the countries in the region, including Saudi Arabia, have been improving, especially after the Geneva meeting in the first half of February between Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal and his Iranian counterpart Ali Akbar Velayati.

That meeting had been forecast shortly before by the daily Tehran Times. The two countries have not had relations since 1988.

The Ambassador said an approaching normalisation of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia meant that Tehran might send some 100,000 Iranian pilgrims Makkah this year.

## Congress seeks polls in May, denies bid to prop Shekhar

NEW DELHI, Mar 11: Former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's Congress (I) party demanded general elections between May 5 and 25 ending speculation that it was trying to keep alive the four-month-old minority government of Chandra Shekhar, reports AFP.

Congress (I) leaders said the party was gearing itself for the hustings, but did not categorically deny that it was attempting a rapprochement with Prime Minister Shekhar, who resigned last Wednesday.

"Everyone is trying to prove that we don't want elections. I am saying we want elections," spokesman MJ Akbar told journalists, refuting charges that the Congress (I) was avoiding a poll.

He said the party had written to the country's Election Commission, seeking elections in May.

PTI adds: AICC-I General Secretary, Ghulam Nabi Azad, despatched a letter to the Election Commission saying that the only alternative to the present political imbroglio was holding of fresh poll. This would also be in the national interest.

While fixing the election date, Mr Azad said, it should be ensured that the voting did not take place during the Ramzan month and time of school examination.

The Congress-I wants that elections should be held and that there should not be a patch up for continuation of the present dispensation at the centre, a party spokesman said.

Meanwhile, a number of Union Ministers met the Congress-I President Mr Rajiv Gandhi in their efforts to bring about rapprochement between the Congress-I and the Janata Dal-S.

"We are totally opposed to any move to bring through the back door a government which has already resigned," said

Prakash Karat, a Politburo member of the powerful Communist Party of India (Marxist).

Added Jaipal Reddy, spokesman for the National Front, the country's main cen-

trist opposition: "The very fact that speculation is growing each hour shows that the danger [of rapprochement] is lurking somewhere."

"We believe it will be both unethical and unconstitutional."

I don't think it will be possible," he said.

The opposition reaction followed an unexpected turn-around Saturday by Mr. Shekhar's fledgling Janata Dal (Socialist) Party, which said it wanted the government to stay on and did not want elections earlier asked for.

The party said its 54 MPs were opposed to a fresh poll to parliament, necessitated by Mr. Shekhar's shock resignation Wednesday after his chief ally, the Congress - (I), effectively took back its crucial legislative backing.

"Rajiv Gandhi has categorically stated that his party has not withdrawn support to the Chandra Shekhar government. Where is the fight now?" the party's Secretary General OM Parkash Chauthala, asked at a news conference here.

In the meantime Gandhi's pre-election campaign is to begin Saturday, with the first draft of his party's Election Manifesto to be ready by March.

"In the present political situation we find ourselves today, going back to the people for a fresh mandate is the only right course," added PV. Narasimha Rao, a veteran Congress (I) politician and former Foreign Minister.

The announcement followed widespread speculation about a reconciliation between Shekhar's fledgling Janata Dal (Socialist) Party and Congress (I) to give the government a fresh lease of life.

The reports drew anger and disbelief among opposition parties, with some condemning President Ramaswamy Venkataraman for not dissolving parliament and not ordering elections after Shekhar stepped down.

The President has asked Shekhar to continue until further orders.



'It's a message to Baker'

## 4 Israelis killed in Gaza Strip

TEL AVIV, Mar 11: A 26-year-old Palestinian on Sunday stabbed and killed four Israelis in west Jerusalem before being shot in the foot and arrested by a detective police, spokesmen said, reports AFP.

The assailant, a male nurse identified as Mohammad Mustafa Abu Jallah from the occupied Gaza Strip told his captors he was sending a message to (James) Baker, the US Secretary of State due here Monday, police said.

Security forces in the aftermath of the attack banned Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip

from entering Jerusalem until further notice.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir denounced the murders as "an ignoble act committed by blood thirsty dogs that exceed in savagery all the norms of terrorism."

A plain clothes detective pursued the attacker, shooting and then arresting him, police said adding that he had a second knife taped inside his jacket and a change of clothes hidden nearby for his escape.

The women had been waiting at a bus stop on Anke street in the Kiryat Yuvel

working class district of west Jerusalem when they were set upon.

Three of the victims, Rosa Eliasfour, 32, Mercedes Banita, 57 and a third woman in her 60's who was not identified were pronounced dead on arrival at Hadassa Hospital in Jerusalem.

A fourth, 20-year-old Myrian Britton died while undergoing surgery.

The killer was also in hospital and being questioned there by police.

Science Minister Yuval Ne'eman, of the ultra-national-

ist Tchiya Party, said on the eve of Mr Baker's visit: "Arab terrorism has raised its ugly head."

Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kolch described the killings as a "vicious and wanton orgy of blood and urged Arabs and their leaders to understand that neither violence nor Saddam Hussein-style terrorism will lead them closer to any of their goals."

Palestinian moderate Elias Freij, Mayor of Bethlehem condemned the murders, saying the killing of these women is against Arab morality."

## Off the Record

## Asia ignorant?

NEW DELHI : Former Professor and author John Money, who at 69 wears the title of the father of sexology, says prudery is making a comeback in the west in a backlash against the Sexual Revolution of the 1960s and '70s, reports AFP.

The Professor Emeritus from Maryland's John Hopkins University said he was saddened by the trend which he said started in the 1980s.

He cited examples of medical students in the US State of North Carolina having to break the law to study the nude in anatomy classes, and a teacher in Arizona being charged with 102 counts of obscenity for showing his 102 pupils an AIDS prevention film depicting explicit sex.

"It seem natural that for every reformation, there is a counter-reformation," Prof. Money said in an interview after presenting keynote paper on orgasmology — a word he hopes will give the science the respectability it needs to be studied without the witch hunts that plagued his predecessors.

The Sexual Revolution in the 1960s followed the discovery in 1940 that penicillin could cure gonorrhoea and syphilis and the introduction of oral contraception in 1960, Prof. Money said.

Then came herpes a cold-sore like virus, and AIDS. Conservatives grabbed these as weapons and spearheaded the trend towards moving sex back into a taboo subject, or that Prof. Money called "anti-sexualism".

Prof. Money has plenty of reasons to worry. He said sex research has not been too bad for him, but reels off a list of Professors who were dismissed from prestigious colleges, including his own John Hopkins University.

The German scientist Wilhelm Reich, a refugee from Hitler's Germany, died in a US jail for his attempts to research sex and the orgasm, he recalled.

"There is no question about it, persecution in the West is growing more loud-mouthed," he said, adding that he did not know enough about Asia to speak about research in the region.

## Communist gamblers

HONG KONG : More than 1,500 people have been arrested in some 5,000 cases of illegal gambling in Beijing since February, a semi-official Chinese news agency reported here Saturday, reports AFP.

The Hong Kong China News Service quoted police in the Chinese capital as saying that since the anti-gambling campaign started in February 1, the authorities had seized more than 180,000 yuan (\$4,800 dollars) in over 5,138 cases. Authorities smashed 337 gambling syndicates, with most of those arrested being workers, farmers, unemployed, private entrepreneurs and retired people, who accounted for more than 50 per cent.

Nearly 560 of those detained were under 17 years old, the agency said, adding that more than 14,250 people had voluntarily registered themselves with the authorities, who had promised to treat them leniently.

Gambling is illegal in China, where offenders can be sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour.

## It's a disease: Stefanie Powers

NASHVILLE (Tennessee) : Actress Stefanie Powers says the extinction of wildlife is a sign of the wastefulness of modern life, reports AP.

"The destruction of an animal species is the symptom of a disease that is killing us all," she said Friday during an appearance to benefit the William Holden Wildlife Foundation in Kenya.

"There is a malignancy of neglect that is destroying the infrastructure of our lives," she said. "In this country, we are the greatest consumers and the largest producers of garbage in the world, and we are more wasteful than any society that ever existed in the history of the world."

Powers is in Nashville appearing with actor Robert Wagner in the play "Love Letters." In the late '70s and early '80s, the two appeared in the television series "Hart to Hart." Powers also starred in the television series as "The Girl from U. N. C. L. E." in the 1960s.