BRANCE

'Allies occupy 15 p.c. of Iraq' Defense Secretary Dick Cheney said Wednesday that allied troops occupy about 15 per cent of Iraq and will continue to do so until a formal cease-fire is worked out, reports AP.

"We don't have any designs on Iraqi territory, but we are not eager to withdraw our forces from there until the situation stabilizes more and it's clear that lraq is going to comply with all the relevant UN resolutions," Cheney told reporters after, addressing House Republicans in private.

Chency said it appears Iraq intends to comply with UN Security Council resolutions, "but that is the absolute minimum that we have to have. They did return our prisoners .. and that was a very important first step.

Bush criticises Arafat : US President George Bush has criticised Yasser Arafat for supporting Saddam Hussein "overly zealously" in the Gulf War, saying Arafat's actions have diminished his influence in the region, reports Ap.

In supporting Saddam, Bush said, the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization "went far beyond where he had to go in order to express his understanding about the dilemma that Iraq was in."

Bush noted that Palestinians have generally looked to the PLO for leadership, but he said "their leader chose wrong on

"Put it this way: He supported Saddam overly zealously and diminished his credibility, not any further in the United States necessarily, because it had gone way down ... but he diminished his credibility in the Arab world, he diminished his credibility with the coalition partners."

Baker's new idea on ME peace: US Secretary of State James Baker brought his new thinking on Middle East peace moves to Syria, holding lengthy talks with President Hafez al-Assad, reports Reuter.

Baker and Assad were still in discussions six hours after their meeting started.

There was no immediate word on how the talks were progressing.

It was believed to be one of the longest meetings Baker has had on his current tour, which has taken him to Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Israel.

13 killed in Britain: Forty-five cars and trucks slammed together in fog early Wednesday in a fiery pileup that killed 13 people and injured 25, police said. It was one of the worst road crashes in British history, reports

The rush-hour crash left unidentifiable hulks of melted metal scattered over the London-bound lanes of the M-4 highway about 70 miles (110 kilometers) west of London, closing one side of the major east-west artery and creating a huge traffic jam.

Witnesses said a fireball crupted after the initial crash at 6:50 a.m.

Albania to free all politicos: Albania will release all political prisoners still held in its prisons by March 17, the official ATA news agency reported on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

A decree on the release of the prisoners was adopted by the Justice and Interior Ministries on Tuesday following an amnesty announced earlier in the day, the agency said.

According to the International Helsinki Federation (IHF), a Vienna-based human rights body, there are still some 200 political prisoners in Albanian prisons.

7 killed in Lanka fighting: At least seven people were killed in Sri Lanka's northern and eastern districts, where the army is fighting rebels seeking Tamil independence, military officials said Wednesday, reports AP.

Two soldiers were killed when rebels from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eclam exploded a bomb under their vehicle Wednesday at Nelukulam village near Vavuniya, the officials said, six more soldiers were injured in the explosion, they said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

In incidents Tuesday, two Tiger rebels were shot to death by troops in northern Sri Lanka, they said. Tamil guerrillas also opened fire on a civilian vehicle, killing its Sinhalese driver, the officials said.

die in Filipino fire: Eleven workers were killed when fire engulfed a Philippine garments factory in Manila before dawn Thursday police said, reports Reuter. Nine other workers were injured as they fled from the

burning factory. Police investigator Corporal Jose Antiojo said the two-hour blaze apparently started in the building's basement where about 20 workers were staying for the night.

"Help, help us,-we're burning," factory workers were heard screaming as flames raced through the building, Antiojo said.

Saddam's loyalists blow up two oil wells

Unrest in Baghdad, situation inside Iraq fluid: US

WASHINGTON, Mar 14 The State Department said there was unrest in Baghdad and said the Iraqi government was using more troops in the Kurdish north to suppress uprisings there, as well as Republican Guards in and around Basra, reports Reuter.

Department spokesman Richard Boucher confirmed that the unrest occurred Tuesday "probably in the Shi'ite neighbourhoods in the eastern portion of the city" of Baghdad but did not give specific details.

"The situation inside Iraq remains very fluid," Boucher said, but added, "It's difficult to give a clear picture of the overall situation there today".

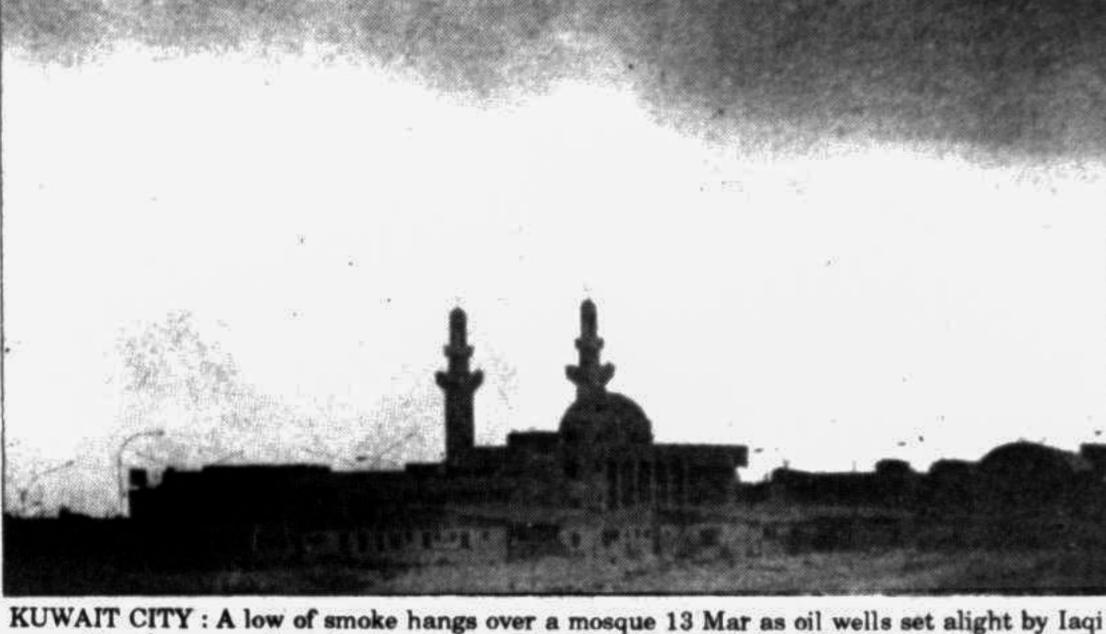
He said the Iraqi government is using larger forces in the Kurdish north in order to suppress widespread unrest there, and there we also continued unrest in southern Iraq.

"The government continues to employ particularly large Republican Guard and regular army forces in the Basra area, and in and around the Shi'ite holy cities of Najaf and Karbala, suggesting that the situation in these areas remains unstable." he said.

Boucher demurred when asked at a briefing whether this unrest would erode the government of Saddam Hus-

"I think it does reflect how widespread the dissatisfaction is with the government, but by saying that, it's still not possible to predict the ultimate outcome," Boucher told reporters. "Government control, when

it's established, can often dis-



occupation forces continue to burn two weeks after the liberation of Kuwait. Specialists say the pollution may cause skin and lung cancer. -AFP/UNB photo

sipate rather quickly into renewed violence," he said.

In the absence of diplomatic relations between Baghdad and Washington - Iraq severed relations February 9 -Boucher said US officials were discussing Iraq's representation in the United States with an unnamed third country.

Reuter from Nicosia adds: Street protests were said to have swept Baghdad Wednesday as Iraq admitted candidly for the first time that the country is in the grip of an uprising against Saddam Hus-

demonstrations in several parts of Baghdad led to clashes in which a number of people from both sides were killed or wounded.

The radio and Iran's news agency IRNA said battles raged between loyalist forces and rebels fighting to topple President Saddam Hussein in the southern port of Basra and the northern oil city of Kirkuk.

An opposition Kurdistan Front spokesman said in Damascus that Iraqi loyalist forces had blown up two oil wells in Kirkuk Wednesday. He gave no further details, but analysts Tehran Radio said massive . said the government may want

to deprive the rebellious north of oil revenue.

Beker Fattah, spokesman for the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, told IRNA that pitched battles were raging in Kirkuk and that the army had launc hed a full-scale assault on Khanaqin, 120 km (75 miles) northeast of Baghdad.

Kurdish rebels were reported to have stormed the main Badush Jail in Mosul, iraq's third largest city, and set all prisoners free.

A spokesman for the Democratic Party of Kurdistan said in Paris rebels had taken the town of Akra, north of Mosul,

and controlled 75 per cent of Iraq's northern Kurdistan re-

IRNA said several big explosions rocked Basra, Iraq's second city. It quoted a Basra citizen who crossed into Iran as saying the rebels were trying to drive loyalist forces out of the city and that Saddam's Republican Guard units were using Napalm bombs.

AP says : Saddam Hussein's crack army units killed antigovernment protesters in Baghdad, battled Kurdish guerillas in the north, shelled rebel holdouts in the south, the opposition said Wednesday.

Baghdad protesters and government forces clashed until noon (0900 GMT) Wednesday in fighting that killed many people, Tehran radio reported without being more specific.

In Basra, the boom of artillery and tanks blasting rebel positions could be heard Wednesday morning in the nearby Iranian city of Khorramshahr, Iran's official media reported.

Tehran radio also said that 30 people burned in napalm attacks on the rebels had been granted asylum in Iran. Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani has asked Saddam and his ruling Baath Party to step down.

In the north, Kurdish rebels claimed they shot down four Iraqi helicopters.

Guerillas surrounded by Saddam loyalists held on to parts of the vital oil center city of Kirkuk and fighting also raged near Khanaqin, 135 kilometers (85 miles) northeast of Baghdad, according to rebel claims that could not be independently verified.

29 mosques destroyed by Allies

NICOSIA, Mar 14 : At least 29 mosques and two churches were destroyed or damaged in Iraq by US and allied bombs and missiles during the Gulf War, Iraq's religious Affairs Minister said on Wednesday. reports Reuter.

Abdullah Fadhil told the Iraqi news agency INA his government planned to carry out a detailed survey of war damage to places of worship in overwhelmingly Muslim Iraq. which has small Jewish and Christian communities.

Fadhil said initial surveys showed that 13 mosques and two churches were among those damaged in Baghdad.

Five big mosques in Basra, Iraq's second city, suffered "massive destruction " while a sixth was completely destroyed, he told INA.

The mosques in Abul-Khasib town near Basra were destroyed, according to the report, which was monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation.

Top priority in restoring and rebuilding places of worships would be given to those in Baghdad. Those in other Iraqi governorates would be dealt with later," Fadhil said.

Iraq repeatedly accused the Allies during the six-week Gulf war of bombing civilian and residential areas, citing a wide range of targets that included 'bedouin' tents and apartment

The allies, led by the United States, say they never deliberately targeted residential areas during the war, which drove Iraqi forces out of Kuwait at the end of last

Parties not ready for national govt: Shekhar

PATNA, Mar 14: The Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar, Wednesday said that the formation of a national government at the centre was a wishful thinking as all political parties were not ready for it, reports PTI.

"For a national government, a national consensus is required," he told the Patna Doordarshan in an interview.

Mr Shekhar said that the situation was not congenial for elections with so much of social tension all over the coun-

"We should have waited for another four or five months for the situation to stabilise further, but the stand adopted by the Congress-I made the midterm poll a necessity," he

The Prime Minister said

that the most important issue before the country at the moment was restoration of will power and confidence in the minds of the people. "A nation is built on will power, but that is what is lacking in our pcople. They have lost mutual faith and confidence."

He said that a new atmosphere had to be built so that the aspirations of the people, particularly those of the down trodden sections of the society, were fulfilled.

Asked about the apprehensions of another hung Parliament in the event of any political party failing to achieve an absolute majority, the Prime Minister said, we must not go by speculation.

Dissolution hailed

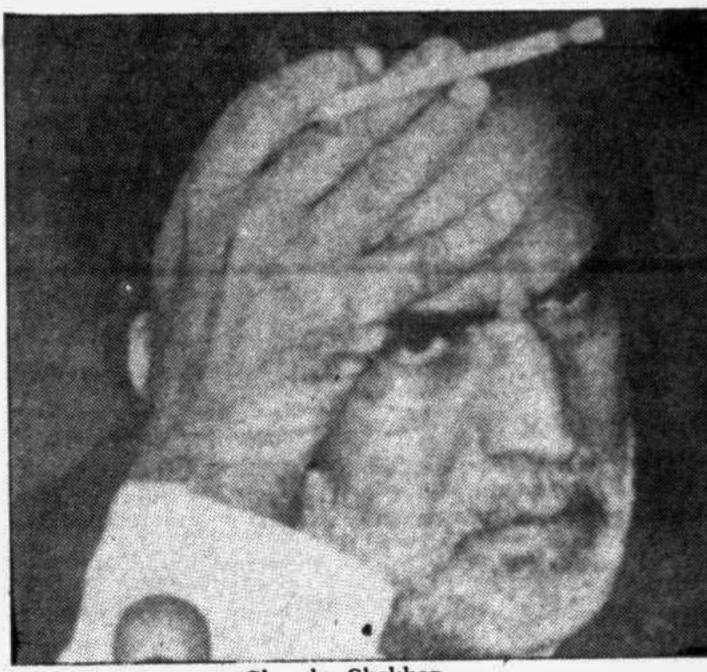
Earlier on Wednesday political parties in union hailed President Venkataraman's decision to order midterm polls but Deputy Prime Minister Lal described it as 'harmful' to the nation.

Major political parties plunged into making preparations for the May elections to be held for the second time in 15 months.

Though involved in some last minute efforts for a patchup, the Congress (I) and the Janata Dal (S) joined the BJP, CPI, CPM and the National Front in wholeheartedly welcoming the dissolution of the Lok Sabha.

The former Prime Minister, Mr. VP Singh, said the National Front and left parties would go to the polls together but commented that the elections were forced by "the Irresponsible behaviour of the Congress (I)." The BJP leader, Mr L K

Advani, said his party proposed to contest at least 450 seats. Devi Lal's son, Mr. Om



Chandra Shekhar

Prakash Chautala, felt that there was no alternative for the President but to order midterm polls.

The Janata Dal (S) decided to field all the 62 members of the dissolved Lok Sabha, including the eight disqualified under anti-defection laws, in the May elections.

Jyoti Basu

In Calcutta, the Chief Minister Jyoti Basu Thursday said that it was yet to be decided if his party would enter into any electoral alliance with Janata Dal or National Front in the made it clear that the CPI (M) would fight the election on a separate manifesto.

Addressing a press conference Mr. Basu, however, said that his party would share a common platform and launch a joint election campaign with those parties on some common issues including land reforms, centre state relation, decentralisation of power and right to employment to all.

Commander killed

Meanwhile, Indian Security Forces have shot dead a top Sikh militant wanted for more than 200 killings linked to a separatist campaign in the troubled northern state of Punjab, police said in Amritsar Wednesday. Satnam Singh Satta, who

carried a price of two million rupees (111,000 US dollars) on his head, died last Thursday ensuing Lok Sabha poll but, in a gunbattle with police in the northern state of Uttar Two of his associates and

two police constables also died in the gunbattle in Pilbhit dis-

The 26-year-old militant headed a powerful faction of the Bhindran Wale Tigers Force of Khalistan, one of a half dozen groups fighting for a Sikh homeland called Khalistan (land of the pure).

Former suspect in Palme killing case arrested

STOCKHOLM (Sweden), Mar 14: The former main suspect in the 1986 killing of Prime Minister Olof Palme was arrested after threatening to kill the manager of a liquor store, police said Wednesday, reports AP.

Store manager Ingvar Sundling told two Stockholm a knife.

ISLAMABAD, Mar 14: Pakpolicy of victimisation.

istani authorities said Wednesday they had failed to trace five missing opposition provincial Deputies who must vote in partial elections to the Parliament's Upper House today, reports Reuter. Commerce Minister Mo-

hammad Naeem Khan told the National Assembly (Lower House) the government was doing its utmost to locate the Deputies. The opposition claims they have been abducted by Sind province authorities to prevent them from

He said the opposition People's Democratic Alliance (PDA) itself might have kept the Deputies in hiding as a political tactic to embarrass the government. The PDA, led by former

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, has been boycotting Parliament for 11 days over the issue.

PDA sources said the alliance was also considering a collective resignation by all of its Federal Deputies if Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's fourmonth-old government does not change what they call a

But the PDA will take part in Thursday's voting for 42

seats of the 87-seat Senate. the sources said. The four Provincial Assemblies form the electoral college for 40 scats while the 217-

seat National Assembly will elect two Senators for the Islamabad capital area.

'USSR shifts arms treaty

viet Union has shifted tens of thousands of weapons and vehicles to storage depots to escape destruction under a

pieces tanks in depots and are preparing them for long-term storage east of the Ural Mountains, the magazine said.

Off the Record

male stripper

after 25 women ripped the clothes off a male stripper at a party, then refused to pay for his frustratingly short act, re-

Consumer Affairs Commission (CAC) spokesman Norman Prentice said Friday that the CAC had received a complaint from a group of women after a stripper ended his 170 dollar (US\$132) act in 10 minutes instead of the agreed half hour.

price because the stripper had performed and audience participation had accelerated his act. "During his disrobing they ripped off his G-string and his

shirt. They both got torn," Prentice said. "They offered to pay for the G-string and shirt but not his

"It's part of the performan-ce for the girl of honour, who is usually highly embarrassed by all of this, to take the gear off," he said. The naked stripper had thrown the maid of honour in a

swimming pool only to get a drenching himself, Prentice said They then refused to pay him a fee. "He was wet and A week after slinking off unpaid the stripper had ap-

the case to us, he said. "Our advice was that as he had performed we suggested

Bird betrays smuggler

smuggler after his confused carrier pigeon flew a load of contraband gems back to their owners, police said, reports Police in the southern diamond mining town of Oranje-

to the backyard of the town's postmaster, the spokesman

Rs 2m being paid for a vote in Pak Senate polls ISLAMABAD, Mar 14 ber's election.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his orthodox Islamic government are expected to win easily this week's senate elections and retain control of Parliament's upper house, reports

his Islamic Democratic Alliance will sweep most of the 46 seats at stake in Thursday's election. In Pakistan, the law-making

Analysts predict Sharif and

power lies with the 217-member National Assembly, the lower house of Parliament, controlled by the Islamic Democratic Alliance since it routed former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in last Octo-

LONDON (LPS) : Bangladeshis make up the most recently established and the most rapidly growing ethnic group in Britain, according to "New Community", a quarterly journal of research and policy on ethnic relations sponsored by Britain's Commission for Racial Equality. In an article, "The Growth of

Bangladeshi Population," Oxford University geography lecturer Ceri Peach says that large-scale Bangladeshi migration to Britain did not occur until the 1970s. when Britain's ethnic minority communities were facing acute economic difficulty. Men and the very young those under the age of 16 -

account for more than half

the current estimated

Bangladesh population of

istan People's Party has two, independents have the rest.

nate seats. Ms. Bhutto's Pakand other smaller groups and Sharif and his coalition

further strengthen Sharif's government, giving him solid majorities in both houses of

But the 87-member senate is empowered to block legislation. Half its members face re-

An alliance victory would Parliament and ensuring smooth passage of his eco-

111 000, which therefore

has considerable potential

for natural increase in

in local authority housing in

urban conurbations outside

London and in the London

Borough of Tower Hamlets

than other South Asian

in the poorer eastern inner

city area of Tower Hamlets,

the Indian and Pakistani

communities preferred the

western end of the city to-

wards Heathrow Airport.

While the Bangladeshis settled

More Bangladeshis tend to live

Britain.

groups.

Sharif now controls 76 Se-

command a solid majority in the National Assembly, with 152 seats. Ms. Bhutto's party

election every three years.

nomic, political and social programmes.

reportedly offering as much as 2 million rupees (100,000 "Anyone who offers a bribe

disqualified." Unlike the National Assembly, the Senate is not chosen

from Kofi Akumanyi

Mr Peach adds that only 35%

owned

their

counterparts.

Institute,

nationalism

of Bangladeshi heads of

household — near to the

West Indian figure of 37% —

accommodation in 1985,

compared with 77% of

their Indian and 74% of

Another article, by John Eade,

senior lecturer in Social

Anthropology and Sociology

at London's Rochampton

Bangladeshis. It says that

during the early 1980s po-

Pakistani

examines

among

the senator who is elected by purchasing votes and those who sell their votes will be

But smaller parties and some independent candidates

are still making their pitch,

dollars) for votes for their electoral colleges. or accepts it, will be disqualifled," Sharif promised." Both

by popular vote.

Bangladeshi community in UK burgeoning Verses."

> its situation to political struggles in Britain and Bangladesh. He adds that because the Islamic group among the Bangladeshis also drew support from sources other than public funding, it was able to take bold initiatives

litical development in

Tower Hamlets encouraged

the community to articulate

its ethnic identity and link

These included the provision of halal food and prayers

1990.

within the disbanded Inner London Education Authority schools, state support for an Islamia College for boys, and opposition to the publication of Salman Rushdie's book 'The Satanic Mr Eade concludes: "Once

political and cultural changes taking place in their country of origin and throughout the Muslim world. Islam appeared to offer another authentic and primordial identity which linked them to a Muslim history. Yet in looking

further afield they could also understand how to on issues affecting their struggle against 'outsiders' lives between 1986 and are overcome immense obstacles in Tower Hamlets."

again, Bangladeshi settlers

were urged to look beyond their local situation to

> newspapers that Christer Pettersson, 43, flew into a rage after being asked for money by a man in the liquor store on Tuesday. He decided to intervene after Pettersson took out

Pakistan fails to trace 5 Deputies

tanks to escape LONDON, Mar 14: The So-

conventional arms treaty, Jane's Defence Weekly reported Wednesday, reports AP. Harry Soyster, Director of the US Defence Intelligence Agency, said the Soviets have placed more than 10,000 tanks, 4,000 other armoured yehicles and 20,000 artillery

Women mad at

ADELAIDE (Australia): Officials were asked to intervene ports AFP.

The CAC decided that 100 dollars (US\$78) would be a fair

naked. He was not in a position to do much bargaining." proached the women to get paid. They refused but referred

they pay 100 dollars." The CAC was unaware if the women had complied, Prentice said.

WINDHOEK: Namibian police homed in on a diamond

mund could hardly believe their luck when the pigeon, with 12,000 rand (US\$4,600) worth of gems strapped to its back, dropped in on the mine from which they had been taken. Mine officials gave the bird to police, who followed it home