

# BRIEFLY

## Bush for open govt in Kuwait :

President George Bush is talking political reform with the newly restored emir of Kuwait, officials say in Islamorada, reports AP.

Kuwaiti officials and western diplomats said Bush, in a letter, urged the emir to allow a more pluralistic system. On Tuesday, White House spokesman Steve Hart would confirm only that Bush and the emir, Sheik Jaber al-Ahmed, exchanged correspondence.

Hart said the US position is "obviously we're for democracy."

As to whether the president was calling for the emir's ruling family to open up the government, Hart said, "Of course we'd prefer change but the pace of it is for the Kuwaitis themselves to decide."

Bush was on a vacation in Florida.

## 72 anti-socialists jailed in China :

China has sentenced at least 72 people for trying to overthrow Socialism during the 1989 pro-democracy movement and more dissidents remain to be tried, a senior judicial official said Tuesday in Beijing, reports AP.

Duanmu Zheng, Vice President of the Supreme People's Court, said a number of cases related to the 1989 unrest remained to be heard.

"I do not know the exact number, but I would imagine it is a very small figure," he told Agence France-Presse.

## 15,000 Indonesians blacklisted :

At least 15,000 Indonesians, including some former Cabinet Ministers, are banned from travelling abroad but quite why is a secret, the respected Tempo Weekly Magazine reported Tuesday in Jakarta, reports Reuter.

"The reasons are a state secret and cannot be disclosed," it quoted director General of Immigration Ronny Sikap Sturabaya as saying.

Bans can be imposed by the Justice Ministry, the Attorney General's office, the Intelligence Agency Bakin and the Supreme Court.

## 35 newsmen flee Iraq :

Thirty-five foreign correspondents fled to Turkey from war-torn Iraq, some swimming across a fast-flowing river on the border under fire from Turkish border troops, reports said Tuesday in Ankara, reports AP.

Turkey's semi-official Anatolia News Agency quoted some of the reporters as saying that one unidentified journalist had died and two were injured in clashes between rebel and government forces. The report could not be confirmed.

Austrian journalist Alex Mokry, who was among those arriving, told The Associated Press that he heard that a reporter was killed but "I am not in a position to confirm it."

Mokry said he was in a group of journalists who entered Iraq from Syria and spent 11 days covering the fighting between Iraqi Kurds and Saddam Hussein's troops.

## Gorbachev meets Nixon :

President Mikhail S. Gorbachev met with former US President Richard M. Nixon on Tuesday and assured him he is still the same "old Gorbachev," indicating he is not abandoning the reform process, reports AP from Moscow.

Presidential spokesman Vitaly Ignatenko the two discussed whether there had been a reversal of Soviet reforms. The spokesman offered no details of the discussion.

However, the official Tass news agency said Gorbachev told Nixon: "The United States can be sure that they are dealing with the 'old Gorbachev'."

## 11,000 AIDS cases reported :

More than 11,000 new cases of AIDS were reported to the World Health Organization during March, increasing the global total to 345,533 reported from 162 countries since the start of records, AP reports from Geneva.

Updates from the United States, Brazil, and Ivory Coast accounted for most of the increase, according to the monthly WHO survey.

The United States listed 6,515 new cases during March. Washington has notified the health agency of 167,803 cases of the deadly disease since 1981.

Brazil reported 1,466 new victims during the three months ending Dec. 29, raising its total to 16,015. Ivory Coast listed 1,444 cases during the two months ending March 1 for an overall 6,836.

## 200,000 Iraqis seek UN help :

Turkey said more than 200,000 people fleeing Iraq were in danger of death near its frontier and called for an urgent meeting of the United Nations Security Council to help them, Reuter reports from Ankara.

"The National Security Council has established that over 200,000 mostly women and children, are facing danger of death near our borders," the council, headed by President Turgut Ozal, said in a statement released after a two-hour meeting.

## Karens' bases bombed :

Rangoon carried out bombing raids and ground attacks against ethnic Karen rebel positions in southeastern Burma near Thailand Tuesday, that border police said in Bangkok, reports AP.

Border police officers reached by telephone in Thailand's northwestern state province said the bombing raids started late Saturday over at least two bases of the Karen National Union (KNU) some five kilometers (three miles) inside Burma's Karen state.

They said they were trying to confirm reports from their own intelligence sources that the planes were Yugoslavian-made jets.

## Hindus demand sacking of Uttar Pradesh govt

NEW DELHI, Apr 3: A massive Hindu religious parliament demanded the sacking of an Indian state government Tuesday, and called for the handover of a controversial shrine disputed by Muslims, reports AP.

World Hindu Council), demanded that the Uttar Pradesh government be sacked for ordering the "anti-democratic and immoral" police action.

Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, is governed by Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar's Janata Dal-S (People's Party-Socialist) with the legislative backing of former Premier Rajiv Gandhi's Congress (I) Party.

A resolution passed by the delegates also demanded that New Delhi dismiss a legal dispute regarding the ownership of the Ayodhya shrine, and that it be handed over to India's Hindu majority.

The Temple-mosque row has led to hundreds of killings in bloody communal clashes across India in recent years and is proving to be a major issue in elections to Federal parliament scheduled in May.

The Hindu religious parliament, which opened Tuesday, comes ahead of a planned public rally here Thursday by the VHP to demand control over the Ayodhya site.

Organizers say the rally will be attended by more than one million Hindus.

Some 6,000 Hindu saints and ascetics adopted a resolution here asking New Delhi to dismiss the Uttar Pradesh administration for ordering police gunfire on Hindus who tried to storm the 16th-century religious site last year.

The ancient shrine is located in Ayodhya, a river-side temple town in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh. Hindus say it is the birthplace of their God Rama and that a mosque there was built after demolishing a Rama Temple.

Muslims deny this, and refuse to let militant Hindus take over the mosque.

In October and November last year, thousands of Hindus tried to storm the mosque in a bid to bring it down, forcing security forces to open fire, killing 24 people and wounding dozens.

The two-day religious parliament here, organized by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP,



ERBIL (Iraq): A civilian car drives past the the bodies of unidentified insurgents in downtown Erbil, in northern Iraq. Iraqi troops loyal to President Saddam Hussein are said to be in control since retaking town. —AFP/UNB photo

# US to hold first high-level meeting with Iraqi rebels

WASHINGTON, Apr 3: The United States on Tuesday announced plans for its first high-level political meeting with Iraqi dissidents since the Gulf war, as the rebels appeared to be losing their battle against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, reports Reuter.

Administration officials insisted there was no shift in the US policy of not aiding the rebels. The meetings seemed intended to mute criticism against President George Bush for urging Iraqis to revolt and then adopting a hands off posture.

At her daily news briefing, State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler gave an unusually spirited defence of US policy, saying support for the Iraqi people's aspirations for freedom and human rights

"does not mean United States military intervention" that would risk American lives.

Assistant Secretary of State John Kelly will meet today six Iraqi Muslim intellectuals, representing Sunni and Shi'ite sects and a cross-section of opposition groups. Tutwiler said. Two Iraq-Americans are among the six.

This is expected to be the first of four meetings with Iraqi dissidents over the next three days. Kurds will be represented in the later meetings, Tutwiler told reporters.

The meeting take place as Iraqi rebels are reported to be losing and suffering severe casualties in their armed struggle against Saddam.

Senior US officials have insisted the meetings do not signal a shift in US policy, which has been to stand apart

from the civil war that has raged in Iraq since US led forces ousted Saddam's troops from Kuwait.

But they suggest the administration felt a need to respond to criticism, mostly from the media and scholars, of its refusal to help the Kurds and other dissidents combat Saddam's vastly superior forces.

Tutwiler insisted there was not contradiction between Bush's urging Iraqis to overthrow Saddam and the US refusal to provide the dissidents with military assistance.

She called the bloodshed in Iraq tragic and appalling but said US policy as supported by the American people, the Congress and the United Nations, "never, ever stated as either a military or a political goal of the coalition or the in-

## Bush troubled by human suffering in Iraq

ISLAMABAD (Fla), Apr 3: President Bush said he was troubled by the human suffering in Iraq and had talked over the situation with Turkish President Turgut Ozal, reports Reuter.

Bush gave no indication, however, that he planned to change his policy of non-intervention in the insurgency against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

"I'm troubled by the situation in Iraq this human suffering however, I'd rather not discuss it right now," Bush told reporters as he and Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady began a round of "pitch and putt" golf at this fishing resort.

international community, the removal of Saddam Hussein."

"The President has stated as recently as last Saturday that it will be next to impossible to have normal relations with Iraq as long as stated all that, it is quite different from saying you are going to interfere yourself..."

Tutwiler also said Bush "did not make a policy speech calling on Iraqi people to put their lives on the line to overthrow the current leadership."

Tutwiler said State Department had received 10 requests for meetings from Iraqi dissidents since it announced last week that such queries would be received favourably.

Some may meet Secretary of State James Baker but that has not yet been decided.

Tutwiler said the department may not disclose names of individuals or groups if they request confidentiality.

## Benazir's alliance to attend National Assembly

ISLAMABAD, Mar 3: Pakistani Opposition Leader Benazir Bhutto said Tuesday her People's Democratic Alliance (PDA) had agreed in principle to end a boycott of the National Assembly, reports AP.

The 45 PDA deputies, who have failed to attend Parliament since February, will decide Sunday on a date to rejoin the House. Ms. Bhutto told journalists here after a second round of talks with the government.

The government said consensus was reached at the bipartisan meeting on basic PDA demands.

Ms. Bhutto and her colleagues had boycotted the Assembly to protest alleged excesses against her Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in Sindh province.

The PDA conditions for return to the Legislature included suspension of court cases against Legislators while Parliament was in session and the release of some Provincial Legislators allegedly kidnapped in Sindh.

# Iraq conscripting youths

NICOSIA, Apr 3: Iraq, which has been fighting rebels by Kurdish and Shi'ite rebels since its defeat in the Gulf war, issued new orders on Tuesday for 18-year-old nationals to join the army, reports Reuter.

A statement by the General Conscripting Department of the Iraqi Armed Forces gave a second batch of those who were born in 1973 until April 12 to report for duty or face "legal measures."

Iraq issued a call-up order for a first batch of 18-year-olds at the end of last year in the run-up to the six-week war during which the United States and its Gulf war allies drove Iraqi troops out of Kuwait.

The latest statement carried by the Iraqi News Agency and monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporations, said:

"Further to our statement of December 31, 1990, the General Conscripting Department calls of conscripts inside and outside the country who were born in 1973 the second batch, to report to their conscription centres, or to the nearest ones if their centres are damaged, during the period April 12-16, 1991."

The second batch includes 18-year-olds not attending schools and those not in the top grades.

AFP adds: The Iraqi government lodged the latest in a series of complaints Tuesday with the United Nations over what it said were continuing Saudi and US violations of its air space.

# Off the Record

## Four dollars fetch \$1m

NEW YORK: A man who paid four dollars for an old painting at a flea market removed the frame and found a copy of the Declaration of Independence that was printed July 4, 1776, and may be worth 1 million dollars, an auction house announced Tuesday, reports AP.

"Here was the most important single printed page in the world in the most spectacularly beautiful condition," said David Redden, vice president of Sotheby's, who authenticated the document.

"It took one second to know it was right," he added. "But what really astonished us was the condition -- so fresh, so clean."

The painting -- an old, torn depiction of a country scene -- was purchased two summers ago at a flea market in Easton, Pennsylvania, by a Philadelphia financial analyst who liked the wooden frame, Redden said.

When he removed the painting, the frame fell apart. But he noticed a folded document between the canvas and the wood backing that appeared to be an old copy of the Declaration of Independence.

The man threw the painting and wood frame away but saved the document, thinking it might date to the 1800s. Several months later, he showed it to a friend who collects Civil War memorabilia and was advised to have it appraised.

The owner, who wishes to remain anonymous, declined a request for an interview placed through Sotheby's."

## Calculator but no wealth!

JAKARTA: Three villagers, hearing a local Chinese man had been buried with all his wealth, dug up the grave but the most valuable treasure they found was a calculator Bismis Indonesia daily reported Tuesday, says Reuter.

"The results were not what they expected. They only found a calculator and 14,000 rupiah (seven dollars)," it said. Rumours had gone around the Central Javanese town of Cilacap that Ethnic Chinese Ko Yong's possessions had been interred with him.

The three grave robbers were later detained by police. They are due to go on trial soon.

## Remains of ships of Columbus

ST. ANN'S BAY: Archaeologists believe they may soon find the 500-year-old remains of two ships Christopher Columbus and his crew lived on for more than a year while marooned on Jamaica, reports AP.

The two caravels, the Capitana and the Santiago de Palos, were the last ships Columbus commanded and would be the first recovered.

Columbus abandoned the vessels fastened side-by-side on a beach when he and his crew of 115 men and boys were rescued from Jamaica on July 29, 1504, at the end of his ill-fated fourth voyage. He died in Spain two years later.

The Capitana and the Santiago de Palos are thought to be buried under water, mud and sand at St. Ann's Bay on Jamaica's northern coast. Repeated attempts to find them, going back to the 1930s, have all failed.

Now, thanks to sophisticated sonar and probing equipment and exhaustive research of historical documents, nautical archaeologists have narrowed the search to a relatively small portion of the bay.

They hope to recover at last some of the ships' remains in time for the 500th anniversary in 1992 of Columbus' first voyage.

Project director James Parrent of the Institute of Nautical Archaeology at Texas A and M University rates his chances, "on a scale of one to 10, an eight."

Parrent believes the chances are good of finding well-preserved hull remains because the caravels ran aground in soft sediment and shallow water. St. Ann's Bay is sheltered by a coral reef, but the beach has been altered over the centuries by hurricanes, earthquakes, erosion and deposits of sand and sediment.

## No swimsuit in beauty contests

KAZAN: The Muslim holiday Navruz has been marked in Kazan for the third time, reports IAN.

A beauty contest of Tatar girls was held for the first time, attended by women of the Republic of Tatarstan, and guests from Moscow, Byelorussia, Bashkortan, Kazakhstan, as well as from Poland, Norway and Turkey.

The girls were to make an impression on the jury not only by their appearance, but, above all, by performing their national songs and dances, showing their knowledge of Tatar poetry and folklore, and folk customs.

There were no swimsuit displays typical of beauty contests -- Muslim customs frown upon demonstration of naked women's body.

Gulnar Salyakhova, student of the Kazan Teacher's Training School, and Gulshag Galimova, a student of the Kazan Medical Institute, were the winners.

Apart from many prizes, the girls received an invitation to visit Australia. It came from Rustam Sadri, a Tatar, who is an Australian businessman.

## Scowcroft holds talks with Fahd secretly

WASHINGTON, Apr 3: US National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft travelled secretly to Saudi Arabia last week where he met Saudi King Fahd and discussed the Middle East peace process, White House officials said on Monday, reports Reuter.

The officials did not disclose specifically what topics were discussed or whether Scowcroft made any additional steps during the two-day trip.

From the end of the Gulf war, President George Bush's administration has been engaged in energetic diplomacy to forge new security arrangements in the Middle East.

The White House also disclosed that President Bush sent a letter to the Emir of Kuwait discussing the political and economic challenges now facing the Emirate.

were mainly over Baghdad. It was the sixth such protest since March 3 when the temporary cease fire in the Gulf war was signed, and the fourth in four days.

Iraq has already reported more than 2,073 coalition air missions above its territory since the signing of the accord, which puts Iraqi air space under the control of the US-led allied forces that drove Iraqi troops from Kuwait on February 27.

## Lamp to kill mosquitoes developed

BEIJING, Apr 3: Worker's daily reported Tuesday that a Chinese scientist recently developed a new type of lamp which will kill mosquitoes, reports Xinhua.

The inventor, Xu Ke, Head of the Tongyu Electronic Appliance Factory in Nantong city, East China's Jiangsu Province, says that the lamp will kill almost all mosquitoes in a specified area within 30 minutes after being turned on. The device emits a special liquid to attract the mosquitoes.

Experts report that this type lamp is highly efficient, safe, and consumes little electricity. In addition, the lamps are pollution free, and do not emit smoke or poison. The experts say lamps of this type are ideal mosquito killers.

# Manila firm to prosecute Imelda

MANILA Apr 3: The Philippine Government's Chief Lawyer Tuesday warned against pursuing a cash settlement with former First Lady Imelda Marcos and threatened to prevent other officials from entering into any compromise, reports AP.

Solicitor General Francisco Chanvez said the government should continue prosecuting the widow of deposed dictator Ferdinand Marcos even beyond 1992, when President Corazon Aquino steps down.

David Castro, the Head of a Special Commission tasked with recovering the worldwide assets of the Marcoses, said Monday that he would reopen talks with Mrs. Marcos on a proposed settlement of one of the overseas cases against her.

Under the proposal, the Philippines would waive freeze on Marcos deposits in five Hong Kong banks provided that 60 per cent of the money, which must not be less than 200 million dollars, will go to the Philippine treasury.

Mrs. Aquino has asked Mr. Castro's office, the Presidential Commission on Good Government with recovering the fortune allegedly looted by the Marcoses during their 20 year rule officially estimated at up to five billion dollars.

Reacting to Mr. Castro's plan, Mr. Chavez said prosecuting the Marcoses "is a commitment by the Philippines to themselves to regain their self-respect and dignity as a nation, which he said the Marcoses had brutalized."

Maintaining that cases against the Marcoses are beyond the realm of negotiation, he vowed to oppose any compromise entered in to by the commission, an independent agency that reports directly to Mrs.

Aquino. Mr. Aquino is under growing pressure to allow Mrs. Marcos to return home five years after a popular revolt installed the present government and sent the Marcoses to exile.

A Swiss Court has ruled that criminal charges should be filed against Mrs. Marcos this year if Manila wants to maintain its claim to at least 350 million dollars in contested deposit made by the Marcoses in Swiss Banks.

A criminal trial would require the presence of Mrs. Marcos, portrayed by the Aquino government in the past as a security threat in Manila.

Mrs. Marcos 61 is reputed to be one of the world's richest women following the death of her husband in Hawaii in 1989.



# Defiant poll candidates to face 6-yr ban Indian EC warns against stirring religious passions

NEW DELHI, Apr 3: India's Election Commission has warned political parties and their candidates for parliament not to use religion or other divisive issues to attract voters and has vowed to crack down on violators.

Chief Election Commissioner T N Seshan said the panel would not allow politicians to get away with appeals for the electorate's support on grounds of religion, caste or language, calling such propaganda a corrupt practice.

Candidates who refuse to heed the warning risk a six-year ban on running for office,

Mr Seshan said in a directive released Monday, adding the commission would also prosecute violators.

Politicians elected to Parliament in the May General Elections would be stripped of their seats if they are found to have ignored the directive, which is in line with India's secular constitution.

The Commission which is an autonomous body, would also withdraw recognition from their parties Mr Seshan said.

Mr. Seshan did not name any political party, but his warning appeared directed

particularly towards the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party), which is seeking power on an aggressive Pro-Hindu platform.

The BJP has promised to build a temple in the northern town of Ayodhya where a mosque is located, seeking to win the votes of Hindus, who compose India's overwhelming majority.

Reuter from Gauhati adds: India's Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar said on Tuesday he was in favour of holding elections in three states troubled by separatist insurgencies, provided they could be conducted free of violence.