

## BRIEFLY



Elliot Kals, age one, finds himself at forefront of residents affected by aircraft noise who blockaded the only road leading to Sydney's International Airport yesterday. Around one thousand protesters disrupted traffic after police moved in to prevent their truck convoy from entering the area earlier in the day. —AFP/UNB photo

**Delhi refutes Sindh CM's charge:** India on Friday described as "irresponsible, motivated and baseless" charges of the Sindh Chief Minister holding India responsible for the assassination of two US diplomats in Karachi on Wednesday. PTI reports from New Delhi.

An official spokesman in New Delhi said, "There is no length of absurdity Pakistan would not go to defame India" adding that remarks of the Sindh chief ministry were not worthy of a response.

**13 Vietnamese die in boat capsizes:**

Thirteen people drowned when an old boat overloaded with passengers and luggage capsized and sank on a river in Vietnam's Nam Ha province, south of Hanoi, the official newspaper Nhan Dan reported on Saturday. Reuter says from Hanoi.

The boat's legal registration had expired in June 1992, the paper said. Twelve women and one man died in the accident on March 4.

**Charles to visit Egypt, Morocco:** Prince Charles was set to leave Saturday for week-long visit to Egypt and Morocco. AP reports from London.

He is scheduled to meet with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Muslim and Christian religious leaders.

**Gore to meet Baltic leaders:** Vice-President Al Gore visits Estonia next week for talks with leaders of Estonia and the other two Baltic republics, Latvia and Lithuania. AP reports from Washington.

On Monday's six-hour visit to Tallinn, the Estonian capital. Gore may greet leaders of the new Estonian Parliament elected last Sunday, the vice-president's office said. They include Arnold Ruutel of the Coalition and Rural Union parties, who was the last president of Estonia when the Soviets ruled the Baltics.

**23 burnt to death in Pakistan:** At least 23 people, including 10 children, were burnt to death when their overcrowded pickup truck caught fire after a collision with a bus in southern Pakistan, police said. Reuters reports from Hyderabad.

The victims were villagers who had been on their way to a religious shrine in the southern province of Sindh.

**Mubarak to meet Clinton:** Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak will meet President Clinton in early April, the White House said on Friday. Reuter reports from Washington.

"President Clinton is pleased to announce that President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt has accepted an invitation to meet with him in early April." White House spokesman Mike McCurry told reporters.

**5 of a Pak family killed:** Unknown assailants slit the throats of five members of the same family, including a 7-month-old baby, news reports said Friday, according to AP from Islamabad.

No one has claimed responsibility for the massacre that occurred sometime overnight Thursday in the army-run town of Wah, 30 kilometres from Islamabad.

**India's gas well fire put out:** One of the world's worst gas well fires that raged for 62 days in southern India was put out on Friday, a news report said. AP reports from Hyderabad.

More than one million cubic metres of gas went up in flames every day. The towering inferno led to the evacuation of 10,000 people in six nearby villages in Anjalapuram, 475 kilometres (295 miles) east of Hyderabad, the capital of Andhra Pradesh state.

Over 100000 troops deployed ahead of assembly polls  
Shoot-on-sight order in Bihar

JEHANABAD, India, Mar 11: More than 100,000 police and paramilitary forces fanned out across India's leftist-ruled state of Bihar today after five people were killed in an explosion ahead of assembly elections, reports Reuter.

The blast occurred on Friday as activists were making bombs in a remote village in the eastern state, local agencies reported.

The victims included a worker for the Janata Dal party, which has ruled the state since the last assembly elections in 1990, the Press

Trust of India (PTI) said. Official said more than 40 people had been killed in violence before the twice-postponed polls in India's second most populous but economically backward state.

Security forces in several districts of the sprawling state have been given orders to shoot-on-sight any people disrupting the polls.

India's tough-talking chief election commissioner T N Seshan had put off the polls, first due to be held in February, citing inadequate security

and fears of rigging. Janata Dal accused Seshan of acting in league with Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's Congress Party and the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

There were worse cases of violence in Andhra Pradesh and Manipur where elections were held on time," said former prime minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh, a Janata Dal leader, referring to two other states which recently held polls.

Bihar is completely peace-

ful compared to the happenings there. Then why pick on Bihar?" He said in an interview with Reuters.

Seshan told reporters on Thursday that he was not satisfied with the security arrangements and has said he might have to put off the second and third days of voting set for March 15 and 19. Vote counting begins on March 21.

The five-year term of the current assembly headed by Janata Dal Chief Minister Laboo Prasad Yadav ends on March 15.

## PLO, Israel to go forward with autonomy

JERUSALEM, Mar 11: Breaking a stalemate, Israel and the PLO have agreed to go forward with autonomy slowly and cautiously, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said on Friday, reports AP.

"What we agreed to and announced yesterday is that the redeployment and the transfer of authorities in Judea and Samaria will be carried out in a gradual manner," Peres said on Israel's second television channel.

"We will take a step, we will see the reactions and the actions. And then we will take another step," he said.

Peres met with Palestine Liberation Organisation Chairman Yasser Arafat on Thursday. The two leaders later announced they had set a July 1 deadline for completing negotiations on implementing self rule in the West Bank.

**Winnie's meet with Mbeki to decide her fate**

PRETORIA, Mar 11: Winnie Mandela, the estranged wife of President Nelson Mandela, arrived at government offices late Friday night for a meeting that could decide her future in her late Friday night for a meeting that could decide her future in her husband's government, reports AP.

Winnie Mandela, the Deputy Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, met with Deputy President Thabo Mbeki to discuss her unauthorised trip abroad last month that defied the wishes of the president.

She made no comment when she arrived at the Union Buildings at about 10 pm (2000 GMT), and it was unclear how long the meeting would last.

Winnie refused twice previously to meet with Mbeki, who has been asked by president Mandela to compile a report on his wife's actions. Speculation has increased that she would be fired from the Cabinet because of the trip of Burkina Faso and other acts of defiance against the government.

**Indian Bar Council chairman jailed for contempt of court**

NEW DELHI, Mar 11: In a far reaching judgement, the Supreme Court yesterday sentenced the chairman of Bar Council of India (BCI), Vinay Chandra Mishra, to six weeks imprisonment and suspended his license for legal practice for three years, for committing contempt of the Allahabad High Court, reports PTI.

The apex court held Mishra, a practicing lawyer with the Allahabad High Court, guilty of criminal contempt by using "insulting, disrespectful and threatening" language against a judge in the courtroom.

The sentence was, however, suspended for a period of four years for watching the behaviour of Mishra, who is also president of the Allahabad High Court Bar Association (HCBA).



Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat (L) gestures as he escorts US Secretary of State Warren Christopher to his car after their meeting in Gaza City on Friday. —AFP/UNB photo

## Benazir holds emergency talks to stop Karachi violence

KARACHI, Mar 11: Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto held emergency talks today to try to figure out ways to stop the rampant violence terrorising her hometown of Karachi, reports AP.

A bomb exploded on Friday outside a packed Shiite Muslim mosque and gunmen opened fire on terrified survivors. Twelve people were killed and 28 wounded.

Many of the victims were child beggars who had come to the mosque for the Muslim sabbath to beg alms from worshippers.

Security was tight in eastern Malir District this afternoon during funerals for those killed.

The mosque attack came two days after gunmen killed two US government employees in a hall of bullets as their van stopped at a traffic light at a busy intersection.

The bodies of the two

Americans were to be flown to the United States later today aboard a special US government aircraft.

There was no evidence linking the bombing to the killing of the two Americans. But both were horrific examples of the surging violence that has convulsed Karachi and threatens to undermine Benazir's government.

No one claimed responsibility for the attack, although many people are blaming the militant Sunni Muslim group, known as the Guardians of the Friends of the Prophet.

At least 1,000 people have been killed in attacks in Karachi in the past year. Most assaults are boldly executed during the day by gunmen who seldom bother to conceal their identities. Arrests are rare.

Most of Karachi's 10 million people have lost faith in Benazir's ability to curb the violence that usually involves either ethnic or religious

rivals.

Until last November the army patrolled Karachi. When Benazir sent the soldiers back to their barracks she said the police would maintain law and order, but many Pakistanis consider police corrupt and incompetent.

Since then there has been an upsurge in violence. Benazir has so far resisted a growing lobby, particularly from the city's business community, to return the army to Karachi.

Some were expecting Benazir to announce new and more stringent security controls for Karachi following her meetings today.

Several weeks ago Benazir announced a crackdown on religious militants and ordered the arrest of about 100 leaders of both Shiite and Sunni Muslim groups. Many of the leaders went into hiding, and her religious and political opponents accused her of pandering to a secular West.

## Perry to talk military ties with GCC leaders

WASHINGTON, Mar 11: US Defence Secretary William Perry will visit Saudi Arabia and four other Gulf states this month to discuss military co-operation with leaders in the key oil-producing region, the Pentagon said on Friday, reports Reuter.

In addition to planned talks with King Fahd and Saudi officials, Perry will meet leaders in Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates during his March 18-23 visit to the area, where the United States is keeping a close watch on Iraq and Iran.

Perry's visit is part of a continuing dialogue between the United States and moderate states in the Gulf, where a US-led military coalition drove Iraqi forces from Kuwait in the 1991 Gulf War. Washington has signed defence cooperation agreements with states in the

area.

Kuwait and Qatar last year agreed to provide bases for stationing additional US armour and attack jets in case of renewed trouble in the region, but Saudi Arabia has declined Washington's requests to store American armour.

The United States has voiced concern about the fundamentalist Muslim government in Iran, including recent statements that Tehran has installed anti-aircraft missiles and artillery on islands in the Strait of Hormuz near the mouth of the Gulf.

Although President Bill Clinton and the Defence Department have since said that the Iranian equipment is mainly defensive, Clinton stressed that the Pentagon was closely watching Iranian activities in the Gulf.

## Aligarh clash death toll rises to 5

ALIGARH, Mar 11: With the recovery of three more bodies, the death toll in yesterday's group clashes in Aligarh rose to five today, reports PTI.

No untoward incident was reported from any part of the city since last night, police said, adding the overall situation was tense but under control.

Police conducted raids in several parts of the city and arrested a large number of people.

The Uttar Pradesh Additional Director General of Police, Law and Order, Shriram Arun, arrived here this morning to take stock of the situation.

He said 200 companies of police and para-military forces were deployed in sensitive areas to maintain law and order.

## US ready to work with any Afghan govt

WASHINGTON, Mar 11: The US government says it will work with whatever government emerges in strife-torn Afghanistan, but will hold it "accountable to international standards of conduct, reports AP.

The statement came amid reports that a militia force known as the Taliban group took over parts of Kabul, the capital, this week.

The ongoing civil war and the anarchy in Afghanistan... threatens regional stability and US national interests", US State Department spokeswoman Christine Shelly told reporters Friday.

The Taliban have declared they want to "rid Afghanistan of the warring factions and to institute a unified, functioning government based on Islamic law," Shelly said.

She said the US government doesn't support any single faction or party.

Nearly one dozen Islamic factions have been fighting for control of capital since throwing out the communists from power in 1992.

The Taliban are the newest Islamic fighting force to emerge. Their soldiers have swept through the southern and eastern parts of the country and now control about one-third of the country.

## Off the Record

## Hotel that served cooked human flesh

HONG KONG: A Macau hotel bought and fattened up babies to be cooked and served as food during World War II, a priest and Macau's most prominent historian has been quoted as saying on Friday, reports Reuter.

Monsignor Manuel Teixeira, writing in his column in the Portuguese-language Macau Hoje (Macau Today) newspaper, said it was "habitual" in Macau during the Sino-Japanese war to serve the hearts, livers and lungs of dead people as food, Lusa news agency reported.

The Hotel Central bought babies. After fattening them they were cooked and served as meat to customers," Teixeira was quoted by the Portuguese news agency as saying.

It was so many years ago, how would we know about that?" an employee of the hotel told Reuters on Friday.

Teixeira said the tiny Portuguese-run enclave became home to more than 500,000 refugees after the Japanese occupied Hong Kong and nearby parts of China and that more than 100 people died in the streets every day.

## Playboy cop files \$10m suit

NEW YORK: A woman who was fired from the New York City police force because she posed nude for Playboy magazine is suing the police department, the mayor and the city for 10 million dollars, reports AP.

Carol Shaya announced her lawsuit Thursday on the "Gerald" television talk show as her lawyer plugged her burgeoning career outside law enforcement: offers for commercials in Europe and Australia, a deal with a French lingerie company and potential movie, television and book contracts.

Shaya was stripped of her badge Tuesday when the police commissioner overruled a departmental recommendation to suspend the city's No. 1 naked crime-fighter for one month and place her on a year's probation.

"I felt the department was a little brighter than this," said Shaya, wearing a hot pink tank top, jeans and a silver motorcycle buckle. "I didn't commit a felony or a misdemeanor, I didn't do anything criminal."

Shaya, 25, also said she wanted her firing reversed. She acknowledged that she could make more money without her uniform — Playboy paid her 100,000 dollars for the photo spread.

## Hitler's uniform, boots on show

MOSCOW: After 50 years of being locked up in a basement, Hitler's uniform and boots went on show Friday — but only after some officials argued they should be displayed like old rags, reports AP.

"Some suggested showing Hitler's jacket just tossed on the floor all crumpled up. But no museum in the world does this," said Col Alexander Nikonov, head of the Russian military's museum.

Hitler's uniform, one of Herman Goering's overcoats and other relics of Nazi Germany were put on display to mark the 50th anniversary in May of the end of World War II in Europe.

Such items were not displayed in the Soviet Union despite constant public celebration of the Red Army's defeat of Nazi Germany. A display of Nazi items would have been seen as an insult to communism and hateful for the millions of Russians who lost relatives in the war.

Some Russians, particularly war veterans, are unhappy about the exhibit. Others worry it may inspire the small, but growing fascist groups.

## Phoolan withdraws suit

NEW DELHI: Dacoit queen of yesteryears, Phoolan Devi, withdrew her suit against the controversial film "Bandit Queen" in the Delhi High Court Friday, after entering into an agreement with the film's producer for deleting some objectionable portions, reports PTI.

Justice NG Nandl dismissed as withdrawn the suit seeking injunction on the exhibition of the movie after Phoolan Devi's counsel informed that she had reached an out of court settlement with Channel Four.

Under the agreement, Phoolan Devi will be paid 40,000 pound sterling (about Rs 19.40 lakh).

The movie will be cleared for exhibition in India after deletion of these portions: — film's title stating that this is a true story, — some offensive portions of Babu Gujar rape — some explicit scenes of a room in Kanpur and, — some explicit portions of rape in Behmai.



## China preparing for invasion: Zhirinovsky

MOSCOW, Mar 11: The extremist Russian rightwing leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky said Friday that China is taking over the Russian Far East through immigration and is preparing for an invasion, Interfax news agency reported, reports AFP.

Zhirinovsky, who frequently blames Jews, Caucasians and other non-ethnic Russians for the country's problems, said China is carrying out a "Crawling, peaceful penetration" across the border in the Russian Far East.

He claimed China was also preparing for a military invasion and had underground cross-border passages that could take up to a million people.

## India becoming a fertile centre for test-tube babies

JAIPUR, Mar 11: India, the world's biggest annual producer of human beings, is now also becoming one of the most fertile centres for test-tube babies, reports IIS.

A boom in artificial fertilisation is sweeping India and new clinics are springing up all over this nation of nearly 900 million people.

India's busiest test-tube baby centre is located in this city in western Rajasthan state. The Jaipur Fertility and Microsurgery Research Centre has already produced 30 babies, and 57 more women are expecting.

Most couples can ill afford the US dollar 1,500 price tag of artificial insemination and the success rate is only 15 to 20 per cent. Still, at least 10

prospective parents come to the Jaipur clinic every day for help in conceiving a baby.

"We don't mind a boy or a girl, but we will not adopt. When your child is not really your own, what can you say of another's child," says one woman who has travelled here from the Bastar region of central India, 1,500km away.

She and her husband have been trying unsuccessfully to conceive for the past 19 years and have travelled to all the other famous fertility clinics in India.

"All the money you earn and hard work you put in is futile if you don't have children. I am so lonely that this time if we do not succeed we will adopt a child," says the wife of a factory worker from Vijaywada district in southern

India.

The rate of adoption in India is increasing, but the pace is still slow and the desire to have one's own babies remains strong.

In rural India, a woman who does not conceive within a few years after marriage is looked down upon as inauspicious and not allowed to participate in religious ceremonies, although it is usually the husband's low sperm count that is the cause.

The Jaipur clinic's Dr Swarankar says: "Most couples come to me as though I have a divine power and can give them what providence has denied, but there are limitations."

In cases where it is a male disorder Swarankar uses the in vitro fertilisation (IVF)

technique to syringe out sperm from the testes to fertilise the eggs with.

In the IVF or embryo transfer technique, the fertilised egg is kept in a petri dish for 24 to 72 hours before being transferred to a woman's uterus. This is used where both fallopian tubes are either absent or blocked in women.

The pregnancy rate through the IVF-embryo transfer method is 20 per cent and involves at least three attempts. The egg is retrieved from the ovaries through a fine needle and placed in an incubator to be inseminated with approximately 100,000 washed mobile sperm.

The other technique is the gamete intra-fallopian transfer performed on women who have at least one normal fallop-

ian tube. The pregnancy rate through this method ranges between 20 and 30 per cent.

Swarankar induces ovulation to get as many as six eggs which he mixes with at least 200,000 active sperm. He then transfers the sperm to the end of the healthy fallopian tube with a fine tube through a small incision in the abdomen.

Patients are open to risks of infection, haemorrhage, injury to the bladder, bowel or other intra-abdominal parts that may necessitate emergency surgery.

Critics say adoption should be encouraged in a country where thousands of children are homeless and hungry. They say a test-tube baby boom in a country that produces more babies every year than China is an anomaly.

## 8 beheaded in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH, Mar 11: Eight men were beheaded by the sword on Friday, including a Saudi sentenced to death for using magic to dupe people, the Interior Ministry said, reports AFP.

The Saudi was found guilty of "using magic, being a charlatan, tricking families and abusing several women," in the Riyadh area, the ministry said, quoted on state television.

Four other Saudis, convicted of murder, were beheaded in the eastern city of Hafar Al-Batin, Riyadh and the north of the Kingdom.

Another Saudi and an Egyptian were executed for kidnapping and murdering a woman in the southwestern town of Abha. A second Egyptian was beheaded for murdering a fellow countryman.