

British Prime Minister John Major speaks to a conference on Britain's "Place in the World" on Wednesday. He called on Turkey to pull its troops out of northern Iraq "as soon as — AFP/UNB photo possible.

UN soldier killed in Bosnia: A Dutch UN soldier was killed on Wednesday evening when a shell hit his observation post in northeast Bosnia where fighting has picked up between government and Serb forces, a UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) spokesman said, AFP reports from Sarajevo.

Two other United Nations observation posts nearby were nearly hit by shell fire earlier in the day, Major Herve Gourmelon said.

40 die in Chinese mine blast: A coalmine accident in China's central Henan province killed 40 people, the Workers' Daily said on Thursday, Reuter reports from Beijing

An explosion at a coal-mine in Pingdingshan on March 26 killed 40 and injured eight, the newspaper said. Sixteen escaped uninjured

Japan, DPRK to resume talks: The Japanese and North Korean ruling parties agreed to sign a joint statement early this morning in Pyongyang as their first major step to resume stalled talks on normalising diplomatic ties, news reports said. AFP says from Tokyo.

The agreement was reached between the Worker's Party of Korea and a joint mission from Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Social Democratic Party and New Party Sakigake, Jiji Press and Japan Broadcasting Corp. (NHK) said.

7 more beheaded in S Arabia: Saudi Arabia on Wednesday beheaded seven foreigners convicted of drug smuggling, the official news agency SPA said, quoting Interior Ministry statements. Reuter reports from Dubai.

The beheadings raised the number of people executed in the kingdom in March to 28, an unusually high monthly toll.

Chiapas ready for talks: Maya Indian rebels in the southern state of Chiapas on Wednesday proposed holding peace talks with the government in Mexico City to end their 15-month old rebellion and discuss national political reforms, Reuter reports from Mexico City.

The Zapatista National Liberation Army said in a statement that the massive presence of army troops in Chiapas impeded holding peace negotiations in the conflict zone, and proposed four possible sites in Mexico City for direct talks with the government.

30 die in Burundi violence: More than 30 people were killed in clashes in northern and central Burundi on Tuesday, the Burundi news agency said on Wednesday in a report monitored by the BBC, AFP says from

It said the killings took place in the districts of Ngozi and Cibitoke in the north and Gitega in the centre of the country.

3 killed in N Australia: A man with a pump action shotgun shot dead two hospital workers and then himself in the north Australian resort town of Cairns on Thursday, police said, Reuter reports from Sydney

The man walked into the Cairns Hospital and shot the two staff, a man and a woman, before turning the gun on himself. they told Reuters by telephone.

3 Iraqi Kurds arrested: Three Iraqi Kurds have been arrested in northern Iraq, charged with setting off a car bomb last month that killed 94 people, an Iraqi Kurd official said on Wednesday. AP reports from Ankara.

Safeen Dizavhe, a spokesman for the Kurdistan Democratic Party, said the party's security officials made the arrest last week in the KDP-controlled town of Dohuk.

Meningitis toll now 1500 in Niger: The number of deaths from a meningitis epidemic sweeping Niger for the past four months has reached 1,500, the Health Ministry said on Wednesday. AFP reports from Niamey.

Around 15,000 cases of the disease have been detected in the same period, the ministry told AFP.

9 Italian tourists kidnapped: Armed Afar tribesmen kidnapped nine Italian tourists in Eritrea near the border with Ethiopia, the Italian Foreign Ministry said on Thursday, quoted by the Ansa news agency, AFP reports from

The ministry said the incident occurred two days before in the Denakil area but had only been known late on Wednesday.

Inmates free 2 hostages in Brazil: Rebellious inmates who had threatened to burn their captives alive released two of their 37 hostages on Wednesday and said they would let the others go the following day, AP reports from Sao Paulo

About 700 inmates took over the Tremembe prison complex, 84 miles (135 kilometres) northeast of Sao Paulo, on Sunday during visiting hours.

Fighting increases

tions in the town.

weekend.

droves this week after the

soldiers and rebels started fir-

ing at one another over the

Wednesday when the soldiers

Heavy, fighting occurred on

BRIFFY UN draft resolution to scrap oil embargo on Iraq

UNITED NATIONS. Mar 30: France, Russia and China have drafted a joint UN resolution that would scrap the oil embargo on Iraq once Baghdad has met international demands for disarmament, western diplomats said on Wednesday, reports AFP.

The four-page document calling for an end to the 1990 embargo imposed on Iraq following its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait was distributed this week to the 12 other members of the UN Security Council, diplomats said.

The draft resolution would not be put to a vote until a UN special commission on Iraqi disarmament tells council members that Baghdad has fulfilled its obligations and dismantled all of its weapons of mass destruction.

"All the identified prohib-

ited weapons or equipment have already been destroyed or neutralised. The long-term monitoring system is operational, and the knowledge of the Iraqi past programmes is almost complete," the draft

resolution said. "The Council, therefore, should be prepared." the document said, noting its distribution would allow council members time to work on the "complex technicalities surrounding the lifting of the oil embargo.

The draft resolution calls for a complete lifting of the embargo without setting quotas for production or exports of crude oil.

The measure, however, calls for certain control mechanisms on Iraq that would allow the United Nations to keep track of oil exports and revenue generated by sales.

As much as 30 per cent of the earnings would have to be allocated to a UN compensation fund that was established to cover war damages during

the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Baghdad would also have to cover the costs incurred by the UN Special Commission on Disarmament, half of the expenses for the demarcation of the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border and the full cost assumed by the United Nations for the return of goods looted from Kuwait.

The release of the text follows a similar move by the United States, Britain and Argentina, who on Friday unveiled their version of a resolution calling for a partial lifting of the embargo.

The "war of resolutions" comes as the United States has asked France and Russia to help them obtain the release of

A Palestinian policeman points at the body of Mofid Hajaj, 23, who was shot dead by Israeli

troops when his truck collided with a border police jeep, killing two officers and injured two

others on Wednesday. Paramilitary police, believing Hajaj, who was from Gaza City, had

crashed the vehicle deliberately, opened fire. Witnesses said it could have been an accident.

Christopher intervenes in

Syria, Israel talks

move a major hurdle to a peace

treaty. Two other issues yet to

be resolved are how much land

Israel would turn over to Svria

and the kind of peace terms it

consideration are a demili-

surveillance to protect against

how the negotiators were do-

ing But the Israeli sources, in-

tarised zone at the border and

Among the measures under

Christopher did not say

would get in exchange.

surprise attack.

two Americans that have been sentenced to eight years in prison by Iraq for allegedly trespassing into Iraq.

The US-Anglo-Argentine proposal would allow Baghdad to sell limited quantities of oil. up to 2 billion dollars, worth over six months, to cover the cost of humanitarian supplies for the civilian population. That measure would in-

crease by 400 million dollars the ceiling on oil revenues fixed in earlier UN resolutions adopted in 1991.

Iraq has steadfastly rejected any restrictions on its oil sales, arguing that the limits are a violation of its sovereignty.

UN disarmament Chief Rolf Ekeus is scheduled to present a report on his commission's activities over the past six months to the Security Council on April 10.

Japan's parliament bans all chemical weapons

parliament today passed legislation to ban chemical weapons, including the nerve gas used in the Tokyo subway gas attack, as part of the ratification of a global treaty, reports Reuter.

The treaty, signed by Japan and 130 countries in January 1993, bans the production and sales of chemical weapons and requires signatories to destroy stockpiles, parliamentary officials said.

It was Japan's first legal move to crack down on the production of lethal gases. Two sets of legislation, one criminal and the other industrial, were enacted along with the ratified treaty, parliamentary officials

The New criminal law imposes a maximum penalty of life imprisonment for making gases such as sarin.

Last year, police said they were unable to conduct an investigation and search the

TOKYO. Mar 30: Japan's compounds of a doomsday cult where sarin residue was found because there were no laws banning the production of such

UK rejects Sinn Fein offer

LONDON. Mar 30: Britain rejected an offer of wideranging talks from the IRA's political allies Wednesday, demanding clearer assurances the Irish Republican Army is serous about disarming, reports AP.

The Sinn Fein party has been pressing for meetings with Britain's senior officials in Northern Ireland and faxed a letter to them Tuesday setting out proposed terms.

Excerpts from the letter obtained by The Associated Press stress Sinn Fein's readiness for "serious, substantive and constructive discussions.

Off the Record

3900 pounds for a bottle of Scotch

GLASGOW, Scotland: A century-old bottle of malt Scotch fetched the top price of 3,900 pounds (6,300 dollars) at Christie's spring auction sale of rare whiskies on Wednesday, but not a dram is likely to be drunk, reports Reuter.

The bottle of Macallan-Glenlivet distilled in the 1890's in the heart of Scotland's speyside whisky distilling region was bought by a collector over the telephone as over 300 bottles went under the hammer in a packed Christie's saleroom.

Although three bottles fetched 3,000 pounds (4,850 dollars) or above, recession has cut deeply into the pockets of malt whisky collectors since a Japanese buyer paid 6,375 pounds (10,300 dollars) in 1991 for a 60-year-old Macallan-Glenlivet malt.

Christie's whisky specialist Martin Green said interest was growing from collectors, especially in Scotland and Italy, ever since Christie's started Britain's first whisky auction in 1989. This year there will be two auctions for the first time.

Now male cop poses

NEW YORK: Don't expect to see Officer Eddie Mallia working undercover. The 28-year-old cop who is baring all in Playgirl could see his job go the way of his clothes, reports

Police Commissioner William Bratton said through a spokesman on Wednesday that Mallia's case was referred to the chief of patrol's office "for the appropriate action."

"In an earlier episode of NYPD nude, Bratton fired Officer Carol Shaya on March 8 for posing in and out of uniform in the August 1994 issue of Playboy. Bratton said she put the department's reputation up for sale - in her case, 100,000 dollars. In response, she has sued the city for 10 million

Mallia got just 5,000 dirs for his 11-page pictorial, complete with centre fold. "Out of Uniform! NYPD's Most Arresting Officer in The NUDE!" promises the front of the May issue, which features Mallia, Uniform shirt unbuttoned, posing with hands on hips.



Wednesday pieces of her personal jewellery collection, which is to be sold at Sotheby's in London this summer. Dame Barbara claims real jewellery is impractical and she is to replace it all with false gems. - AFP/UNB photo

Zhirinovsky promoted

MOSCOW, Mar 30: Russian ultra-nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky has been promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel in the army reserve, the Defence Ministry said on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

Zhirinovsky was promoted from captain on the order of Defence Minister Pavel Grachev, by passing the rank of major, a duty officer said.

Itar-Tass news agency quoted a spokesman for Zhirinovsky's Liberal Democratic Party as saying the promotion was in recognition of Zhirinovsky's "outstanding contribution to strengthening the motherland's defence."

The ministry declined to comment.

Zhirinovsky, a strong backer of the military, wrote in his 1993 autobiography that he dreamed of the day when Russian soldiers would wash their boots in the Indian Ocean.

Tamil rebel commits suicide

GOLOMBO, Mar 30: A Tamil rebel killed himself by swallowing a cyanide capsule when police tried to search him at a roadblock in eastern Sri Lanka. military officials said Thursday, reports AP.

This is the second case of suicide by the guerillas since a truce came into effect in the ethnic war 12 weeks ago.

On Wednesday, two unarmed rebels on a bicycle were stopped by police in Kalawanchikuddy, 210 kilometres (130 miles) east of Colombo, said Brig. Nihal Jayakody, the military spokesman.

One of them consumed cyanide when police insisted on searching him. Police overpowered the second rebel be fore he could do the same. Javakody said.

The Tamil guerrillas wear cyanide capsules around their necks which they swallow to avoid capture.

The captured rebel was handed over to guerilla com-

manders, Jayakody said

Perry due in Ukrain today

WASHINGTON. Mar 30: Defence Secretary William Perry will press US concern over Russia's transfer of arms and technology to Iran during a visit to Moscow next week, a senior US defence official said on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

Perry flies to Ukraine on Friday on a week long trip that will also take him to Russia. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to tighten US ties with the former Soviet states and help convert the Soviet defence industry to consumer produc-

But the defence official told reporters in a briefing that Perry will also personally press US concern over Iran and Chechnya when he meets Russian Defence Minister Pavel. Grachev and other officials in Moscow on Monday.

ments in the disputed terrierate the pace if they want to tory. Dennis B Ross his principal aide on the Middle East, is expected to go to the region next

week to meet with Israeli and

sisting on anonymity, said the "I met with them two days ambassadors had made ago and I will meet with them progress toward an understanding on security arrange-

again before the week is out," he said. "We are facilitating the discussions. The Israeli sources said the

is growing short."

Syrian leaders.

first meeting with Christopher was held on Monday.

AFP/UNB photo

The talks between Rabi-

novich and al-Moualem are

being held in Washington.

They are to be joined by senior

military officers from the two

serious," Christopher told the

Indiana students after making

a speech on US policy toward

Russia. "They realise the time

"The parties are absolutely

countries after Ross' return.

Repeal of '50 Indo-Nepal treaty demanded

KATHMANDU. Mar 30: Four communist splinter factions today demanded that the minority communist government immediately repeal the "unequal" 1950 Indo-Nepal Peace and Friendship Treaty. reports AFP.

WASHINGTON, Mar 30:

Secretary of State Warren

Christopher has intervened in

sluggish negotiations between

Israel and Syria as the two

sides move toward and under-

standing on future security ar-

rangements on the Golan

by Israeli sources on Wednes-

day after Christopher told stu-

dents at the University of Indi-

ana he had intervened in ne-

gotiations in Washington be-

tween Ambassadors Itamar

Rabinovich of Israel and Walid

reach and agreement."

rity arrangements would re-

The two sides "must accel-

An understanding on secu-

The progress was disclosed

Heights, reports AP.

al-Moualem of Syria.

Christopher said.

"The 1950 Indo-Nepal treaty, which is obsolete now, has forced Nepal to become India's semi-colony," the four factions said in a statement.

"So long as that treaty is not revoked. Nepal and the Nepalese people will remain dependent on a foreign country," said the statement released by the Nepal Communist Party-unity centre, NCPflaming torch carriers (Mashal), NCP-Marxist, Leninist and Maoist, and the Nepal "The treaty is against

Communist League.

Nepal's national sovereignty independence, security, selfesteem and economic progress," it said. The treaty supposedly al

lows extensive cooperation between the two countries in defence matters, but Nepal has often complained that India has not informed Kathmandu of past conflicts with China and its arch-rival, Pakistan.

The four factions regretted that even the present Nepal Communist Party-United Marxist and Leninist (NCP-UML) government, which came to power after mid-term polls last November, is doing no more than revising the treaty instead of cancelling it.

Govt forces advance in central Bosnia SARAJEVO, Mar 30: Bos

nian government forces have advanced several kilometres (miles) in central Bosnia, but remain pinned down in the northeast where a battle is on for control of a television relay tower, the UN Protection Force said here today, reports Citing reports from the two

warring parties. Major Herve Gourmelon said government forces appeared to be in full control of Paljenik peak in the Vlasic mountain range of central Bosnia and had advanced "several kilometres" west wards. Bosnian Serb forces might

have destroyed a television relay tower in the area before withdrawing, sources here

India's navy under pressure from neighbours also become a part of the Intional principal combatants nously built - will be opera view is the Russian offer of the

in Char-e-Sharif dia's blue water navy, the sixth NOWGAM, India, Mar 30 largest in the world, is over-Thousands of people have fled stretched and under pressure a town in Kashmir that has and may find it difficult to been surrounded by Indian soldiers fighting with Muslim cope with the increasing musguerillas hiding near an ancle power of belligerent neighcient shrine, reports AP. bours, say experts here, re-

The soldiers took up positions around Char-e-Sharif The navy's share of India's about a month ago when rebels defence budget is shrinking in sharp contrast to its increasing from two groups fighting for independence in Jammu economic and military role in Kashmir state took up posiprotecting off shore oil interests and India's island territo-Residents began fleeing in

ports IPS

According to Admiral Vijai Singh Shekhawat, India's naval chief, the navy's current annual allocation of around 12 per cent of India's defence budget of approximately one billion

dollars is inadequate. began moving their bunkers ward at the northern end of in adeition to us notinal duties inte nal security has dian Navy's mandate, it executes off-shore patrols in the Palk Straits to check the infiltration of armed Tamil guerillas fighting for an independent homeland in the north and east of Sri Lanka

Besides, 19 naval detachments have come up along the western Gujarat and Maharashtra coastline to check smuggling of explosives and armaments following the serial bombings in Bombay two years ago in which over 350 people

Naval officials concede their force is spreading itself thin and to sustain even existing levels of operational preparedness, needs additional resources.

..... fifth of the Indian Navy's (IN) fleet of 36 opera

including frigates, submarines, warships and aircraft carriers will have shrunk to around 27 by the year 2000.

riers, 18 submarines, 13 frigates and five destroyers besides 20 corvette's and 33 offshore patrol craft. It's air arm comprises 23 sea harriers, 75 strike and anti-submarine warfare helicopters and assorted maritime reconnaissance aircraft

But a large proportion of the principal combatants are from the Soviet Union or indigenously built Soviet mod els which face imminent re-Of 18 submarines, only

eight kilo-glass and four HDW time houte from Commons two of which were indigetional after 2000.

The remaining six foxtrotclass boats from the Soviet Union - two of which are al-The IN has two aircraft car- ready in non-operational reserve — will have been retired. No fresh orders have been placed.

> Naval officials say the overall pace of inducting and launching new vessels into service. too, has been slow. Since 1980 only seven principal combatants - three frigates, two destroyers and two HDW type submarines — have been locally built and launched.

sources, they add. Officials in India's Ministry of Defence (MOD) say purchasing equipment from countries like Russia, offering it cheap. is one way to counter the re-

source crunch. Currently under MOD re-

Admiral Gorshkov, the 44500ton Russian carrier, to replace the ones up for decommissioning. Senior naval officers say the Russian carrier is the only one available in the world today which fits the Indian parametres of price and dura-

Acquiring it would not only add punch to the IN but also go a long way in raising the force's morale, depressed by an aging fleet, shortage of spares and insufficient re-

But despite a dwindling budget and related problems. the IN has maintained a high profile by holding joint ma noeuvres with navies from Austraha, UK, France, Indonesia. Russia, Singapore, Malaysia,

Oman. New Zealand and the weapons to UN US since 1991.

It also successfully participated in the UN peace keeping mission in Somalia, with two of its ships anchored permanently off the Somalian coast for over two years till two months' ago as support for Indian troops.

But many important programmes like the ones to develop missiles are way behind schedule, officials say.

Pakistan, meanwhile, with

whom India has fought three wars since independence 48 years ago is investing heavily in its navy. Analysts say Pakistan wants

maritime interests,

to play an enhanced role in South Asia, aimed principally at checking India's growing

said today it would provide details of its biological weapons programme by April 10, when the UN Security Council is due to receive a report on Iraqi disarmament, reports AFP. "We have promised to pre-

Iraq submits report

on biological

April 10

BAGHDAD, Mar 30: Iraq

Iraqi Information Minister Hamed Yussef Humadi. The promise was made to

pare our answers and present

them before April 10," said

UN disarmament chief Rolf Ekeus when he ended a mission to Baghdad Monday the official said.