Picture dated March 5 shows Dr Mahmoud Al-Zahar, a top Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS) leader who was arrested by Palestinian police on Friday in Gaza City. Under pressure from Israel and the United States, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat has moved to eradicate HAMAS militants after a wave of suicide bombings in Israel which have left 60 dead since February - AFP/UNB photo

## Hamas won't hand over arms or halt anti-Israeli attacks

BEIRUT. Mar 9: The radical Palestinian group Hamas will not hand over its weapons or halt anti-Israeli attacks, the movement's representative in Lebanon said today, dismissing as fakes earlier statements tothe contrary, repots AFP.

However, he added that the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) was ready to close its offices in Lebanon if the government in Beirut asked it to. The United States asked Arab countries, namely Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, to close Hamas offices.

"We hope that Lebanon and the Arab countries will not bow to zionist and American pressure. But if the Lebanese government asked us to close our offices we will do so," Mustafa Laddawi said.

He said "Hamas will not turn in its weapons. The brigades of Martyr Ezzedin Al-Qassam have not issued statements saying this," referring to the group's military wing. "It is the Palestinian au-

thority which issued these

declined to comment further.

said, AP reports from Stafford.

gently rocked by the blast.

London.

embankment:

capital, Amman.

statements," he told the Lebanese Daily-An-Nahar.

"Military action and suicide operations are part of our strategy to liberate our land," he said, adding that there was no split between the movement's political and military branches.

A statement attributed to Ezzedin Al-Qassam military wing in the West Bank agreed Tuesday to heed a call from the movement's political lead-

ers to stop all attacks on Israel. But it was not signed by the unit called "Martyrs of Yehiya Ayash" which claimed three of the four suicide attacks in Israel since February 25 which left 60 dead.

Another group, the Islamic Jihad, claimed responsibility for the fourth suicide bombing Monday in Tel Aviv that killed 13 people.

Ezzedin Al-Qassam also announced Wednesday from the Gaza Strip that it would surrender its arms and explosives to Yasser Arafat's Palestinian authority.

BRIEFLY

Blast rocks London street: An explosion

rocked a central London street near an underground Railway

station, police said early yesterday. Reuter reports from

Brompton Station but she had no further details. A

spokesman for the fire brigade confirmed reports of blast but

A spokeswoman said the explosion was near the West

An eyewitness in a nearby building said the area had been

Train mishap kills 1 in Stafford:

A mail train plowed into a freight train laden with chemicals

late Friday night, killing one person and injuring 29, police

Fire fighters working under floodlights cut through the

There was no immediate word on the cause of the

wreckage of the mail train searching for at least one man-

believed still trapped several hours after the 11 pm (2300

accident, which crumpled two cars of the mail train,

upturned others and flung one into the side of an

Sudanese opposition quits polls:
The main opponent of Islamic leader Hassan Turabi has

withdrawn from Sudan's parliamentary elections, saying that

the country's military leader since 1989, is widely expected to win the presidential race. Turabi is also expected to win a

Queen Noor shows oldest statuary:

American-born Queen Noor of Jordan, trained in architecture

at Princeton University, presented publicly for the first time

It belongs to a group of heads, two-headed torsos and full-

on Friday a piece of what she called the world's oldest

length plaster figures, found in 1985 when a bulldozer was

helping clear the ground for a motorway near her country's

Chinese cop executed for murder: A

Chinese policeman has been executed in the southwestern

province of Guizhou for murdering five people in a drunken

rampage after the lunar new year holiday, a report seen Friday

sentenced Han Bin to death Sunday at a mass rally attended

by more than 30,000 people and he was executed

British diplomat Gibson dead: A

British diplomat who was shot and paralysed while trying to

Graeme Gibson, 43, second secretary in the British High

Commission's Commercial department in Nairobi, was shot in

the neck at close range on Nov 24, following a car chase

escape a gang of car hijackers in Kenya died Friday, the

The intermediate people's court of Anshun prefecture

statuary, AP reports from Washington.

said, AFP reports from Beijing.

immediately, the Guizhou Daily said.

Foreign Office said, AP reports from London.

The elections - Sudan's first since 1986 - began Wednesday and last until March 17. Lt. Gen Omar el-Bashir,

his supporters were intimidated, AP reports from Khartoum.

GMT) accident near this central England town.

# Rebels occupy parts of Grozny in a bold raid

# Russian troops mount 'clean-up' operations against Chechens

GROZNY, Russia, Mar 9: Russian troops mounted "clean-up" operations against groups of Chechen guerillas who occupied part of the regional capital Grozny in a bold raid, reports Reuter.

After three days of the fiercest fighting in Grozny since Moscow troops drove separatist rebels out more than a year ago, a Russian commander said late on Friday his forces controlled the war-torn

The situation in the Chechen capital is controlled by federal forces." General Nikolai Tkachev, Russia's military Chief of Staff in Chechnya, told Interfax news agency.

He said rebel activity had "noticeably diminished" compared with previous days, but acknowledged "suspicious" people were on the move in the northwestern suburb of Staropromyslovesky.

He gave no details. "By 9:30 pm (1830 GMT). shooting in the city had practically stopped," he said.

However, at around the same time, sporadic gunfire / and more powerful blasts. which locals said came from light tanks, could be heard close to Grozny city centre. Occasional tracer bullets swept across the night sky.

Officials of the Moscowbacked Chechen government had said earlier it could take several days to flush out all the

Despite being outnumbered and hugely outgunned, the lightly armed Chechen rebels loyal to separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev have again delivered a severe blow to Moscow's forces. Tkachev said three Russian

soldiers were killed and nine wounded on Friday alone in the fighting with rebels. A Russian military spokesman told Itar-Tass news

agency on Thursday that about

70 Russian Interior Ministry

troops had been killed and 160 wounded in the fighting. while about 40 servicemen were missing.

Tass reported heavy fighting on Friday in central Grozny between Dudayev's former presidential palace and Minutka Square but later said the rebels had been driven out of Minutka.

Earlier another report says. the Russian military said Chechen rebels holding large parts of Grozny had received reinforcements, and predicted more fighting in the battered regional capital. After a day of fierce fight-

ing in the capital on Thursday, with bursts of hand-to-hand combat, the Russian military command said it had received information the guerillas were planning to storm a television tower in the city.

Interfax news agency quoted the deputy interior minister of the pro-Moscow Chechen government, Yevgeny

Panteleyav, as saying Russian forces planned to launch a "clean-up" operation in Grozny early yesterday.

His statement came hours after Russian elite paratroopers backed by armour marched into the city centre to help beleaguered security forces hold off the rebel offensive.

But the Russian military sounded less optimistic about prospects of an immediate end to the rebel operation, which has inflicted serious political damage on President Boris Yeltsin with elections loom-

Interfax quoted a Russian military spokesman in Chechnya as saying the rebels controlled about one-third of Grozny and were massing forces around the television

"During the day they were looking for possible approaches to the tower and have concentrated an assault group during the night."

# Confce against terrorism in Egypt

# World leaders to attend 'summit of peacemakers'

WASHINGTON, Mar 9: In a dramatic stand against Middle East terrorism, world leaders swiftly accepted invitations to a US-sponsored conference in Egypt that President Clinton proclaimed a "summit of the peacemakers." reports AP.

Wednesday's one-day meeting in the scuba-diving resort of Sharm el-Sheik was called to demonstrate support from Europe and the Arabs for Israel, badly shaken by a wave of bombings that has killed 61 people since February 25.

It was also intended to take the initiative from Islamic terrorists, who have jeoperdised the peace process, and give it back to peacemakers.

The summit will "send a dramatic and powerful signal of opposition" to the Islamic resistance movement Hamas, which claimed responsibility for the Israeli bombings. State Department spokesman Nick Burns said on Friday.

The conference will look for "tangible and practical steps" to counter terrorism. Burns said.

The Middle East peace pro-

to Clinton, who has made it a showcase of his foreign policy. White House officials believe Clinton's involvement bestows the mantle of statesman and peacemaker for the coming

presidential campaign season. Moreover, the United States wants to give a boost to Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, architect of Israel's peace policies, whose Labour government is battling to hold

power in May 29 elections. The leaders of Russia, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Canada said they would attend the summit, along with Peres and representatives of some Persian Gulf and North African countries. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak will be the summit host and, with

Clinton, its co-sponsor. Secretary of State Warren Christopher extended personal summit invitations by telephone to Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov, Syrian Foreign Minster Farouk al-Sharaa, chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority and other officials.

Arafat and Boris Yeltsin said cess is particularly important they would attend.

## China fires another missile

TAIPEI, Mar 9: China today fired another missile into a target zone off Taiwan; the ruling Kuomintang (KMT)-run China Television Co reported. says AFP.

The network did not say into which of the two designated zones - north and south of the island — the missile landed.

Taipei-based Cable Television Broadcasting System (TVBS) also reported the missile firing, the fourth since Beijing began its eight-day drill on Friday.

The Taiwanese Defence Ministry refused to confirm the firing, saying there was no need to report every Chinese missile fired near Taiwan.

Beijing fired three missiles early Friday, two of which hit the target zone near Taiwan's port of Kaohsiung in the south. The other landed in the target zone off the port of keelung in the north.



Rescue workers evacuate on Friday fourteen year-old Chinky Boi some twenty hours after a five-story apartment collapsed Thursday. At least 17 people were killed and 20 other missing when the building came crashing down overnight in central Bombay. Police blame renovation work on the main floor of the structure for its collapse. - AFP/UNB photo

Wording of treaty yet to be decided

#### **UN urges Afghan** factions to lay down arms

UNITED NATIONS, Mar 9: The UN Security Council on Friday urged Afghanistan's warring parties to lay 'down their arms and seek a negotiated settlement, reports AFP.

Security Council president Legwaila Legwaila of Botswana expressed the Council's concern, saying it was hoped that. sooner rather than later the leaders of Afghanistan would lay down their weapons and negotiate a peaceful end to their conflict.

The Council urged the international community to "do everything" to promote a peaceful settlement.

The statement came after four people were killed and to injured in a rocket attack on the Microrayon district of the besieged Afghan capital on Wednesday.

Three people were reported killed in an earlier attack today.

## **Turkish Cypriot** jet hijack drama ends

MUNICH, Mar 9: Police arrested a pro-Chechen gunman early Saturday after he released all of the 109 hostages on board the Turkish Cypriot airliner hijacked nearly 12 hours earlier, reports AP.

Although officials had said four hijackers had commandeered the Boeing 727 after take-off from northern Cypress, Munich Airport spokesman Hans-Joachim Bues said it appears there was only

The hostage drama ended quietly and without bloodshed. when the hijacker allowed the remaining hostages to descend the airplane. Bues confirmed all 101 passengers and eight crew had been freed.

Police said they would discuss the motive and the nationality of the hijacker, as well as the discrepancy in the reporting of the number of gunmen, at a news conference at 6:30 am (530 GMT).

# US, Russia join hands against

#### India in agreeing to N-test ban GENEVA, Mar 9: Russia and "We will not be brushed "We will agree on the scope of

the United States have joined forces against India in agreeing to a total ban on nuclear testing, although they have yet to decide on the wording of a future treaty, reports AFP.

Grigory Berdennikov, Moscow's representative at the negotiations here on a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), backed his US counterpart Stephen Ledogar Friday in a confrontation with India's Arundhati Ghose.

Ghose insisted that New Delhi continued to insist that in exchange for a global test ban the five officials nuclear powers should commit themselves to a timetable for phasing out their weapons.

aside by anyone who says this is rhetoric," Ghose said, speaking at a seminar to report progress after two years of negotiations. "This is not rhetoric.'

But Ledogar replied: "I firmly believe that those who seek such linkage run a risk of derailing the CTBT negotia-

Ledogar also played down the remaining difference between Washington and Moscow on how a treaty should be worded.

"Don't get upset if the Russian Federation and the United States currently use slightly different expressions," he said.

this treaty. That the kind of progress we can be optimistic Berdennikov added, "we

will see how far we can go text wise, the main thing is the concept" But representatives of the

38 countries involved admitted that wide differences still existed on the scope of the treaty, the system of verification, the date and the terms of its coming into effect.

Diplomats said that Russian and the United States were basically in agreement, but that Moscow sought concessions for lining up with the Western formula also approved by Britain and France.

# Off the Record

## Fancy footwork to cool rush hour tempers

MANILA: Manila's traffic police have decided that if they eant kick out the jams, they'll try some fancy footwork to cool rush hour tempers, reports AP.

More than 100 traffic policemen are being trained to dance while directing traffic in a new programme designed to lift the spirits of motorists rather than lighten the city's notorious traffic.

"Waiting for traffic is sometimes a very tedious thing to do and we thought if we can entertain motorists in a way, why not?" says general manger Roberto Nacianceno of the Metro Manila Development Authority.

MMDA chairman Prospero Oreta. who initiated the programme, dubs it "trafficgraphy" - short for traffic and choreography. Oreta acknowledges taking the idea from the famed

"dancing cops" of Bangkok. But unlike Bangkok's disco police, an informal group who began dancing on their own. Manila's programme is an official creation.

The dancers even get a pay bonus — a salary expected to exceed 6,000 pesos (230 dollars) a month, compared to the 4.000 pesos (154 dollars) given most of the nearly 2.000 traffic enforcers who work for the MMDA, officials say.

The agency, in charge of traffic control in Metro Manila, thinks the first group of dancing cops will be ready to start strutting next week.

It has been conducting dance classes on a street in front of its headquarters. At the end of the session, the trainees including some who have never danced before - are taken to one of Manila's busiest intersections for an exhausting onthe job performance.

## Di's fan declared mad!

LONDON: A German doctor. Klaus Wagner, who has been trailing Princess Diana and declaring she should be queen was ordered held in a mental hospital on Friday, reports AP. "He is a danger both to himself and the public," Prosecutor Nazir Afzal said in Horseferry Road Magistrates' Court in central London. "Psychiatrists have assessed him and come to the conclusion that he is deluded, that it is the queen who is

at threat from him, and not the Princess of Wales." Magistrate Roger Davies ordered Wagner, 37, to be detained for 28 days' assessment at Claymore Hospital in northeast London. He was taken from the court cells without

Police arrested Wagner, an orthopedic surgeon, outside Harrods department store 10 minutes before Diana arrived

for a charity event on Thursday night. Among a crowd of 200, Wagner unfurled a banner with a picture of Diana and the words. "This is our queen," and a picture of her mother-in-law. Queen Elizabeth II, and the

words "Elizardbeast we are 666 of you". In demonology, 666 indicates the great beast, or devil. Wagner, who comes from Berlin, has been trailing Diana at

her public engagements since last year. The British General Medical Council says he qualified as a doctor in Heidelberg, Germany, in 1985, and registered as a

# Indo-Pak troops trade gunfire across Kashmir border

JAMMU, India, Mar 9: Indian and Pakistani troops exchanged gunfire overnight across a border in the northern state of Kashmir, but there were no immediate reports of military of civilian casualties. officials said today, reports

doctor in Britain in 1988.

(BSF) spokesman here said Pakistani soldiers fired some 15.000 machingun rounds in Kashmir's frontier Samba district, but added that there were no casualties on the Indian side.

gmt) on Friday, peppered houses and cowsheds in the Indian villages of Pindi and Ramgarh for some four hours.

iated but added that they had no details of possible casualties across the border in the Pak-

A Border Security Force

The cross-border firing which began at 8:00 pm (1430 the BSF official said.

Residents said the Indian paramilitary soldiers also retalistani section of Jarwal.

Officials said the firing in

Samba. 45 kilometres (27 miles) southwest of Kashmir's winter capital of Jammu. sparked protests in the villages with residents demanding their evacuation from the militarised frontier zone. "We could not sleep for the

whole night because of the heavy firing," said Pindi resident Ram Lal and added that machinegun bullets peppered their homes and farms.

Estranged South Asian neighbours India and Pakistan regularly trade gunfire across the border in divided Kashmir despite attempts by the two sides to cool down military tensions at the frontiers.

## Dalai Lama blasts China's policy towards Tibet, HK, Taiwan

through the city.

NEW DELHI, Mar 9: Tibet's spiritual leader the Dalai Lama accused China today of waging a campaign of "intensified repression" in Tibet and adopting an "increasingly aggressive posture" towards Taiwan and Hong Kong, reports AFP.

"We are witnessing a general hardening of Chinese government policy, the Dalai Lama said in a statement commemorating the 37th anniversary of the March 10, 1959 uprising against Chinese rule in Tibet.

"China is at a critical junction: Its society is undergoing profound changes and the country's leadership is facing the transition to a new genera-

#### PARIS, Mar 9: Millions of women around the world joined forces on International Women's Day on Friday to demand equality, reports AFP.

They focused the demands on an end to violence and exploitation, equal pay and working conditions, and full representation in government.

"Today, how many of us will be raped, sold, forced into prostitution, strangled by a husband because their parents have not paid a dowry? How many will be mistreated for having had a baby girl?" Wrote Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasreen, living in self-imposed exile since her book "Lajja" provoked outrage among Mus-

lim fundamentalists. Nasreen, in Paris, said she found it difficult to celebrate a day for women. "I suspect it is precisely be-

cause we still see women weak and without defence ... that we have judged it well to institute a day for women. Has anyone ever had the idea of a day for men?" she said.

The UN Development Programme, in a report Friday. said women are still an economic "under-class," accounting for 70 per cent of the 1.3 billion people around the world who live below the absolute poverty line.

In horrifying statistics, the report said one women in six was raped during her lifetime and that each year a million children, the vast majority of them girls, were forced into prostitution.

The report also said women held only 10 per cent of parliamentary seats around the world and six per cent of ministerial posts.

of women have been killed. raped and kidnapped in a civil war with Islamic radicals, 200 women staged a demonstration under the theme "women martyrs, women of the future." Egyptian women protested

In Algeria, where hundreds

their inequality before the law in their country, where men can pled attenuating circumstances for killing an unfaithful wife. Women can also only travel with the authority of their husbands. In Kathmandu, thousands of Nepalese women took part in a

rally to demand equal pay for equal work tougher action against criminals and social security for women. In Britain, opposition Labour Party Deputy Tessa Jowell demanded equal politi-

cal representation for women.

reminding the public that only 63 of the 650 members of parliament are women.

Some 3,000 women from the east Bosnian enclave of Srebrenica, that was overrun by Serbs

last summer, protest against the lack of information about missing Bosnians, on the

International Women's Day on Friday in Tuzla. They marched trough the centre of Tuzla

stopping outside government and Red Cross buildings, demanding information about their

people who have been missing since last years' refugee exodus.

Millions of women around world reiterate demand for equality

In France, an equality advisory group recommended a change in the constitution to increase the number of women parliamentary deputies — currently six per cent.

Feminist groups and Roman Catholic nuns got together in Rome to discuss communal objectives in an initiative launched by religious leaders. High on the agenda was sexuality and the church. Religious leaders said they

planned to continue the dialogue which had been "not only possible, but constructive."

Meanwhile, population action international warned Friday that millions of women and children would suffer after Washington cut its funding for veloping countries. "We do know that women.

and their children will suffer. Tens of millions of couples around the world benefit directly from contraceptive supplies and family planning services funded by the US government," Pai said.

- AFP/UNB photo

The aid distributed by the US agency for international development, is to be cut by 35 per cent for 1996 — budget restrictions imposed by Congress — from 547 million dollars to 356 million dollars. Pai said

Reuter adds women make up nearly half the world's workforce, but many still face a "living nightmare" as the work under almost slave-like conditions, the International Confederation of Free Trade

family planning projects in de- Unions (ICFTU) said on Friday. Women are confined to the least skilled jobs, are the principal victims of unemployment and make up 70 per cent of the 1.25 billion people who live in poverty, the group said in a report issued on International Women's Day.

The feminisation of the labour market, while proof of the vital contribution of women to the world economy is being accompanied by a feminisation of poverty, insecurity and exploitation," it said.

Women hold 85 per cent of the part time jobs in the European Union and are a major part of the "informal sector" workforce in the developing world: taking jobs such as market seller, domestic worker or seasonal labourer. the report said.

### Iraq blocks UN team from suspected N-arms site UNITED NATIONS, Mar 9

A UN arms inspection team was blocked from site in Iraq. UN sources said. The standoff followed an announcement by UN officials in Baghdad that they found documents and parts of chemical or biological rockets at another site, reports AP. The Security Council held an unscheduled meeting Friday

tion. Council diplomats said a statement was expected later in the day A US official, speaking on

afternoon to review the situa-

condition he not be named. said the Unites States considered Friday's standoff "a serious matter