# Kabul warns Islamabad against reconstructing transit road

KABUL, Mar 10: Afghanistan today issued a stern warning to neighbouring Pakistan to abandon a plan to reconstruct a transit road running through Afghan, territory without Kabul's permission, reports

"They should not go ahead with the repair work on the road as the region is a battlefield and anything could hap-pen to their project there," Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Najibullah Lafraie said.

"It is therefore better that Pakistan halts the plan immediately and stops its interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs," he told AFP.

Lafraie's comments came after Islamabad last week dismissed Kabul's violent objections to the proposed reha-bilitation by Pakistan of a 900 kilometre (562 miles) transit road through Afghanistan.

The dilapidated route links through the Pakistani town of Chaman to the northern Afghan town of Torghunday, on the country's border with Turkmenistan would be used as a trade link with Central

News of the Pakistani plan to repair the roadway - which passes through five Afghan provinces controlled by the Taliban militia -sparked outrage here last week, with officials saying the Kabul government's permission should

have been sought in advance. Pakistan retorted, saying it would launch the rehabilitation project as the plan to open the route had been agreed by the Pakistani, Afghan and Turkmen governments in 1993. But Lafraie branded Pak-

istan's argument "ridiculous, saying the accord had only been agreed in principle and that more discussions were needed between Kabul and Islamabad before the project could begin.

We do not object to the reconstruction of the road in principle, in fact it would be very good for the people of

Afghanistan to have a new transit route," he said.

"However we strongly object to the way the Pakistanis are going about this without regard to international norms. although we are willing to fulfil the agreement provided it is implemented in a proper way," he added.

Lafraie said the southwest of Afghanistan, through which the road passes, was a "stable and peaceful" area when the trilateral agreement was signed, but had degenerated into a war zone since the Taliban came to power there 18 months ago.

"The Pakistani's did not come up with the promised funding when we asked them to honour their side of the agreement in 1993," he said.

Things have since changed radically in the area and it is therefore now not the right time for this agreement to be implemented," he said.

Lafraie, who returned Friday

from a six-day official tour of Iran, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, also revealed that the Turkmen government had vowed not to support the road reconstruction project or to allow goods to be shipped on

Ties between Kabul and Islamabad have become increasingly strained over recent months with both sides trading accusations and bitter

Earlier Reuter says, three people were killed and seven wounded as a rocket fired by rebel forces landed on a residential area of the Afghan capital Kabul on Saturday, the offi cial Kabul Radio said.

The broadcast, monitored in Islamabad, said two shops were destroyed by the rocket, which it said had been fired by Taliban Islamic militia besieging Kabul.

The Taliban has besieged Kabul since October in its drive to oust President Burhanuddih Rabbani.



US President Bill Clinton (R) and Vice-President Al Gore approve an Internet demonstration from Ygnacio Valley High School students Luke Rockwell (L) and Julie Allen on Saturday in Concord, California. Clinton and Gore kicked off Net Day '96 to get classrooms connected to the Internet. - AFP/UNB photo

### Hainan Airlines plane hijack drama ends

BEIJING, Mar 10: Chinese authorities have ended the hijacking of a boeing 737 airplane of Hainan Airlines at southern Zhuhai Airport, captured an unknown number of hijackers, airport officials said by telephone today, reports

"All the passengers have been freed," an official said by telephone from Zhuhai Airport The state of emergency at the airport has been lifted,"

she added She refused to say how many passengers were aboard Hainan Airlines flight CCH 109 when it was hijacked.

The plane had landed at Zhuhai, adjoining the Portuguese colony of Macau. The origin of the flight was not immediately known.

An earlier report says, a boeing 737 airplane of Hainan Airlines was hijacked to China's Zhuhai Airport today the Portuguese News Agency

Sihanouk may

step down soon

for illness

Cambodia's King Norodom

Sihanouk has been diagnosed

with a brain tumor and may

soon step down as head of

state, national radio and televi-

said National Assembly

President Chea Sim, who acts

as head of state in the King's

absence, would be appointed

as a regent to serve until the

king's death, the report said

quoting a letter sent from

China to the king to his son,

first Prime Minister Prince

cancer and diabetes that he

suffers from had reappeared

and that his future could not

be "estimated or speculated on

in the very short-or even

King Sihanouk also said the

Norodom Ranariddh.

The 73-year-old monarch

sion reported today, says AFP.

PHNOM PENH. Mar 10:

### Lankan navy destroy 4 LTTE boats: Several Tigers killed COLOMBO. Mar 10: Navy tion of a Tiger arms ship Sri Lanka, has stepped up se-

troops opened fire and destroyed a rebel arms flotilla in northern Sri Lanka, killing several Tamil Tiger guerillas. the Defence Ministry said here today, reports AFP.

Troops sank four out of five boats belonging to the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) off the island's northern peninsula of Jaffna over the weekend, the ministry said A defence spokesman

claimed that a large number of guerillas perished in the attack although the exact casualty figure's were not immediately available. There were no casualties among the troops, he

There had been stepped up navy patrols in the island's north after last month's detec-

TAIPEI, Mar 10: Taiwan on

Sunday condemned China for

planning live-fire war games

off the island this week, saying

they will seriously endanger

Taiwan's air traffic and slow its

booming trade with China, re-

tional and irresponsible," said

Kao Koong-liang, vice chair-

man of the government Main-

charts policy on China.

land starting Tuesday.

land Affairs Council which

Increasing its pressure on

Taiwan, China announced Sat-

urday it would follow up its

missile tests with eight days of

war games southwest of the is-

used, making the war games

potentially more menacing to

Taiwan than the three missiles

that landed on its doorstep

Friday, and which were

thought to have dummy war-

Live ammunition will be

They are "unnecessary, irra-

ports AP.

which was eventually sunk after a joint air and navy operation off the island's northeastern coast.

The LTTE is leading a protracted campaign for independence in the island's northern and eastern regions. More than 50,000 people have died in bitter fighting in the past 13

Reuter adds, police rounded up 250 Tamils during a daylong raid in this ancient capital city as part of a security sweep against Tamil Tiger rebels, officers said on Sunday.

Some 210 of the Tamils. who were seized on Saturday. had been released by today once they had established their identity, police said.

Anuradhapura, considered the birthplace of Buddhism in

Taiwan condemns China for

live-fire war games plan

Lee Teng-hui accused Beijing

of destabilising prosperous

square mile (17,000 sq km)

rectangle designated for the

air and sea exercise is close to

Taipei's busiest air corridor

connecting more than 300

flights daily. The corridor links

Taipei and Hong Kong with

Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia

istration declared the zone a

dangerous area and advised all

aircraft to and from Hong Kong

The 6.600 square mile

to divert south by at least 27

(17,000 sq km) rectangle

designated for the exercise

lies north of busy shipping

routes between Taiwan and

Hong Kong, the port which

handles much of Taiwan's

trade with China in the

absence of direct trading links

The Civil Aernautics Admin-

and the United States.

kilometers (16 miles).

Officials said the 6,600

East Asia.

curity against possible raids by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, fighting for a homeland in the north and east. Several villages near the

city, 100 km (60 miles) northeast of Colombo, have been attacked by the LTTE since the rebels broke off peace talks with the government in April last year.

in Colombo the Defence Ministry's operational headquarters said the navy sank four LTTE boats on Friday night off the west coast of the northern Jaffna Peninsula, part of the LTTE's would-be home-

Naval personnel found two bodies in one of the boats before it sank, the headquarters said in a release.

port. Kaohsiung on its south-

ern coast, will be little af-

fected, but freighters sailing

between Hong Kong and

Shanghai will have to divert

southeast Chinese coast and is

30 to 45 miles (50-70 kms)

from the Taiwanese islands of

point of the Taiwan Straits

which the two arch-rivals have

carefully respected as an unof-

ficial border for decades. Tai-

wanese officials have publicly

warned that an intrusion

across the line by Chinese

planes or ships would be con-

sidered a hostile move. But

they refuse to say how Taiwan

on condition of anonymity

Sunday, said Taiwan did not

not believe China could mount an invasion, but that war games

so close to the dividing line

A military official, speaking

Its edge touches the mid-

Quemoy and the Pescadores.

The rectangle lies off the

eastward.

would react.

# Off the Record

## To mark Int'l Women's Day

HELSINKI, Finland: Female lawmakers stripped, beat themselves with birch switches and dipped into the icy Baltic Sea to celebrate their foremothers, who were the first women in Europe to receive the vote, reports AP.

At the Finnish Sauna Society in downtown Helsinki on Friday, a dozen prominent women took a dip to mark International Women's Day, their splashes broadcast on nationwide radio by the Finnish Broadcasting Company.

"Wow, is this cold," gasped Outi Ojala as she climbed out of the icy sea. "But it feels good and makes your skin tingle." Afterwards they ran into the sauna and beat themselves with traditional birch switches to improve blood circulation.

## Piece of bomber coming home after 51 yrs

MONTCLAIR, Virginia: For 51 years, Stephen Stofko has remembered how his B-17 bomber pitched violently after it was hit by German antiaircraft fire, and the incredible noise as it spun toward the ground, reports AP.

"I remember saying out loud, 'Oh God, is this really happening to me'?" Stofko said. On Friday, 51 years to the day after Stofko and eight of his fellow crew members bailed out and were taken prisoner by Nazi forces, he will get another look at what little is left of

that plane. And the survivors will continue a search for the remains of the 10th crew member, presumed killed in the crash. Stofko, 71, and three other members of the bomber's crew

will watch as young soldiers collect a 10-foot (3-metre) section of the plane's tail from a farmer's field in what used to be East Germany

"It's an artifact - an antique, I guess. And so are we," said Stofko, a retired computer expert living in suburban Washing-

The tail section, with its insignia and identifying numbers still clearly visible, will go on display at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base museum in Dayton, Ohio. said curator Charles Worman.

Stofko, then a 20-year-old bombardier, and his fellow crew members were based in Italy as part of the 15th Air Force. On the day they were shot down, on Stofko's 12th mission, they had been sent to bomb one of Nazi Germany's last oil refiner-

The only crew member who didn't escape the crash was Sator Sanchez, a veteran of 65 previous bombing missions. Stofko'says he didn't know the other nine crewmen before the flight and spoke only briefly with Sanchez before they

### car-jacking was fast spreading. -AFP/UNB photo BEFFIY

A Serbian man hurries to save his belongings from his

apartment in a burning building in the Serb-held suburb of

Ilidza on Saturday. With three days to go before the Sarajevo

suburbs of Ilidza and Grbavica revert to the control of the

Muslim-Croat federation authorities, looting, arson, and

OIC's Bosnia committee meets today: A special group set up by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OlC) to mobilise help for Bosnia-Herzegovina will meet in Islamabad this week, officials said yesterday, AFP reports from Islamabad.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Assef Ahmed Ali will open the two-day meeting of the OIC committee on Monday, an official statement said. This will be the third meeting of assistance mobilisation group since its formation last September at a Kuala Lumpur

which make up the OIC contact group on Bosnia. Blast kills 4 in Italy: At least four persons were killed and several injured laté Saturday in an explosion followed by a fire in a three-storey building in a suburb of north Italian city of Bologna police said, AFP reports from

meeting of defence and foreign ministers from the states

One of the injured, a man of 46, admitted that he was to blame as he had tried to commit suicide by gassing himself, police said.

Bologna.

British defence secy in KSA: British
Defence Secretary Michael Portillo arrived Saturday in Saudi Arabia where he is to discuss weapons purchase and other military issues with Saudi leaders, an official said. AFP reports

from Rivadh. Saudia Arabia is one of Britain's primary clients for weapons, with contracts worth billions of dollars. NATO chief to visit Russia: NATO

Secretary-General Javier Solana will visit Moscow later this month on a three-day trip aimed at boosting relations and overcoming Russian opposition to plans to extend the alliance into former communist Europe, Reuter reports from Brussels. Solana, the first NATO head to visit Russia since 1992, will hold talks on creating a permanent upgraded relationship and Russian participation in the alliance's peace Implementation Force (IFOR) in Bosnia, alliance sources said.

Israeli blasts death toll now 58: A Romanian labour died of injuries sustained in a March 3 bus bombing in Jerusalem, raising the death toll in a two-week series of suicide bombings to 58 victims. AP reports from

The four attackers also died in the four bombings which began February 25. Imer Amroz, 51, died Saturday at Jerusalem's Hadasah-Eín Karem hospital, spokesman Yossi Shoval said. His body will be flown to Romania for burial, Shoval said.

#### medium-term," the report IRA plotted to Serb leaders warn blow up British NATO-led peace force Parliament

LONDON, Mar 10: The Irish Republican Army (IRA) hatched a Guy Fawkes-style plot to blow up the British Parliament while it was in session by means of an explosivesladen barge on the River Thames, a report said today, reports AFP.

PARIS, Mar 10: "Don't kill

us! Our families will bring

money." In chilling detail, a

confessed Bosnian Serb war

criminal describes the mas-

sacre at Srebrenica, where

hundreds of Muslims begged

for their lives only to die in a

tant 25-year-old soldier sought

by the International War

Crimes Tribunal, told the re-

spected Paris daily Le Figaro a

crisis of conscience prompted

him to personally slay "only

as 'possible," he said. "At one

point, I murmured to one of

my comrades, 'God Knows ev-

erything we've done today.' He

snapped back at me: 'Shut up

Officials of the War Crimes

"I tried to kill as few people

70" victims.

and shoot"!

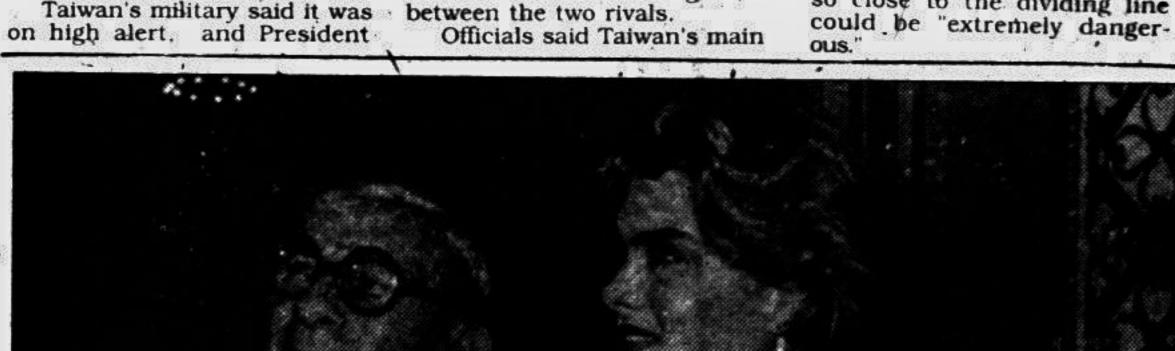
Drazen Erdemovic, a repen-

barrage of bullets, reports AP.

said. "The resistance of the The Mail Today claimed the people is the most important plan was discovered in papers found at the home of Ed 'Obrien, an IRA bomber who Karadzic also warned against trying to apprehend killed himself when a device him, saying that to do so the he was carrying exploded NATO-led force "will need prematurely on a London bus many more troops than they last month.

The paper said the paramilhave right now." "I don't think they will itary group, which ended a 17dare, because they know exmonth ceasefire in its camactly that my security is very paign for a united Ireland with well designed. I think they are a bomb in east London that left. no capable of doing that withtwo people dead, intended to out terrible losses on both stuff the barge with two tonnes sides," Karadzic said. of explosives.

The two interviews were The blast on the River conducted on March 4 and 5 Thames outside the palace of by Mega reporter Theoodoris Westminster could have killed Roussopoulos in Bosnian Serb hundreds, making it the territory. The five hour Mladic bloodiest attack in the IRA's 75-year history, the Mail on interview took place in an undisclosed location, Sunday said.





File photo dated November 5, 1989 shows US Comedian George Burns (L), seen with actress Brooke Shields as they attend an event sponsored by the Museum of Broadcast in New York in honour of Burns' work in radio and television. Burns died on Saturday at the age of 100 at his home in California. - AFP/UNB photo

#### .Russia claims regaining control of Grozny GROZNY, Russia, Mar 10: Meanwhile, an Interior

Russian authorities claimed they were regaining control of the Chechen capital Grozny today, but snipers remained active after another night of clashes with separatist rebels. reports AFP.

The Army Command Centre was quoted by Interfax news agency as saying that only small numbers of Chechen fighters remained in the city and that there were now only sporadic attacks on Russian

However, persistent smallarms fire and sporadic explosions could be heard overnight in the city centre, where rings of tanks have been positioned around the Russian administration building since Wednesday when the rebels launched an offensive on the heavily guarded city they lost to the Russians a vear ago.

Snipes hidden in high buildings were continuing to open fire, making every area dangerous.

Ministry representative in Grozny said he had no confirmation of a report on Russian television that the Chechen rebels' top military commander, Aslan Maskhadov, had been wounded. Interfax reported.

The rebels, using small arms and hand-held anti-tank weapons, wiped out Russian positions throughout the southern half of the city within hours of their infiltration and surprise attack Wednesday.

The Russians immediately hit back with artillery rockets and helicopter gunships and there were fears of heavy civilian casualties in the bombard-

Officials at the only fully functioning hospital, which is cut off from much of the city. told AFP on Saturday that more than 60 people, mostly civilians, had been treated for wounds and another 10 or more had died in hospital.

## EU puts pressure on China to improve its HR record

PALERMO, Sicily, Mar 10: The European Union is putting pressure on china to improve its human rights record or face embarrassing international criticism, reports Reuter. EU officials at a weekend meeting of foreign ministers

ATHENS, Mar 10: In defi-

nt television interviews.

Bosnian Serb leader Radovan

Karadzic and military com-

mander Gen. Ratko Mladic say

the NATO-led peace force

would pay heavily if it tries to

arrest them for war crimes.

one thing: That I am very

expensive and that my people

support me," Mladic said in an

interview with Athens' private

Mega channel network. It was

view since the Dayton peace

accord was signed, alleged that

the 60,000 NATO led forces in

Bosnia were trying to find ways

to arrest him for trial at the

International War Crimes

rised to arrest Mladic and

Karadzic if they come across

them but have no mandate to

Peacekeepers are autho-

"They surely have put to-

gether special teams and units

Tribunal in the Hague.

track them down.

Mladic, in his first inter-

"They have to understand

reports AP.

o air Sunday.

teld Beijing that unless it showed progress the EU would forcefully back a damning resolution before the UN Commission on Human Rights. "The Chinese are very sen-

said the 15-nation bloc had

stive on this issue," said one BU diplomat at the gathering on the Mediterranean island of

The Foreign ministers also criticised China over its actions off Taiwan, where Beijing last week tested missiles and on Saturday conducted live-firing exercises. Rising tensions between China and Taiwan, which Beijing views as renegade Chinese territory, have spawned worries across the world.

that follow where I am, where

I move, not fust here in Serbia

but in other places with the

aim of achieving their goal",

been taught anything by

Somalia, it seems," Mladic

"But of course they have not

Mladic said.

Finnish' Foreign Minister Tarja Halonen said the EU minister were unanimous in their concern. "We regret what has happened greatly," she told Reuters.

British Foreign Secretary Malkcolm Rifkind, whose government has to tread carefully with Beijing in view of the 1997 handover of Hong Kong. said China should be aware of the world's distress at its actions near Taiwan.

Diplomats said the call for improvement in human rights followed a meeting in Rome on Friday of senior EU officials. with Yugoslav officials.

Erdemovic who served with him in a special 80-man com- July 20. mando unit.

The court has indicted 53 other people on war crimes charges. Only two, both Bosnian Serbs, are in custody so far. Serb authorities still refuse to hand over any suspects for trial, but they have recently agreed to let investigators question witnesses on

The Bosnian government and the International Red Cross are trying to determine what happened to about 7,000

Tribunal based in the Hague, men missing from Srebrenica. Netherlands, come to Belgrade an Eastern Muslim enclave on Tuesday to discuss the case that fell to the Serbs last July. Erdemovic told Le Figaro

Tribunal investigators also for its weekend edition that want to question Radoslav "about 1,200" men, mostly Kramenkovic, 29, a friend of Muslims, were gunned down in a 24-hour killing frenzy last

Bulldozers plowed the bodies under. Erdemovic said. He said he decided to break his silence after relations eroded between him and his unit's commander, Lt. Milorad Pelemis.

Two days after the Srebrenica massacre, Erdemovic says, he was shot and gravely wounded by a top aide to Pelemis. Last month, he said, Pelemis ordered him expelled from his won home, the last straw that prompted

Confessed war criminal tells about Srebrenica massacre Erdemovic to confess his role in the massacre — and possibly implicate others.

Erdemovic said he joined Pelemis' unit in January 1995. and that it was designed to carry out acts of sabotage and the "elimination of troublesome people.

in jarring detail, he described his unit's role in the Srebrenica massacre. He and fellow commandos.

he said, were ordered to fire their Kalashnikovs at men - all dressed in civilian clothing who were brought to them by the busload.

"Some of them were very young, 17 to 18 years old. The oldest were in their 50s," he said. Soldiers hurled numerous insults at the first group of about 60 victims, yet "they didn't say a word," he said.

But when a second bus pulled up and its passengers were forced to stand before the bodies of the first victims, some carried out : "Don't kill us! Our families, who are in Austria, will bring money." Erdemovic recounted

He said one of his comrades shouted back, "whoever has to (Deutsche) marks will save himself. Get out the money." But the Muslim victims said police had already emptied their pockets.

"We resume firing." he said. Busload after busload, the massacre confinued. Erdemovic said, estimating about 20 buses of victims were

brought to the soldiers. "Most of them begged us for mercy or promised us money. Some insulted us. Others sang.

he said. "I tried not to shoot at the voungest. I don't think that I

'Allah Ahkbar' (God is great)".

killed more than a total of 70 prisoners. Erdemovic said he asked his commander to spare one victim - a Muslim man in his

50s who said he had helped about 20 Serbs escape from Srebrenica and claimed to have names and telephone numbers to prove it. "Sorry." Erdemovic said he finally had to tell the man.

The chief doesn't want us to leave behind a single living witness. In an army personnel car-

rier on the way back from the massacre." the men got drunk on beer," Erdemovic said 'They sang at the top of their lungs. I kept quiet."