

Palestinian women protest against the violence and the Israeli blockade on the Palestinian territories during a demonstration held in front of the International Red Cross offices in Gaza City on Tuesday. The Israeli army has closed the crossing points between the Palestinian territories and Israel following the recent spate of suicide bombings in Israel. - AFP/UNB photo

BRIFILY

Hamas bomb-making factory found: Palestinian police said Tuesday they had found a secret Hamas bomb-making factory in the autonomous Gaza Strip, AFP

reports from Gaza City. Large amounts of explosives, chemical products, weapons and ammunition were discovered at the underground site near Khan Yunes in the south of the strip, they said. Several people were arrested. Police have round up close to 600 suspects from the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) and the Islamic Jihad after the two groups carried out a wave of suicide bombings in Israel between February 25 and March 4 in which 61 people died.

7 held in Indonesian mine riot:

Seven people have been arrested on charges of masterminding attacks on a US-owned copper mine in Irian Jaya that injured 15 workers and damaged company property, the official Antara news agency said Wednesday, AP reports from Jakarta.

It was unclear what set off the attacks. It quoted a military official as saying that three of the 15 were in serious condition while homes, vehicles, warehouses and other buildings were badly damaged by rioters hurling sticks and stones and shooting arrows.

Menem in favour of death penalty: Shocked by the brutal murder of a teenager last week. President Carlos Menem said Tuesday, he was in favour of

introducing the death penalty, AP reports from Buenos Aires. "We need the death penalty for such crimes," Menem told local radio, referring to the murder of 16-year-old Christian Campos, who was allegedly kidnapped, shot and burned to death by four police officers in the Alantic resort city of Mar del Plata. Menem's comments came one day after the influential governor of Buenos Aires province, Eduardo Duhalde, called for a national debate on the issue of capital punish-

Storm claims 2 in Cambodia: An electrical storm battered Cambodia's second largest city, Battambang, earlier this week, killing at least two people, a newspaper reported yesterday, Reuter says from Phnom

The Cambodian daily said several hundred homes were destroyed or badly damaged during the one-hour storm on Monday which snapped trees and brought down electricity lines around central Battambang district. Residents said a 15year-old was decapitated by metal sheeting torn off a roof. Another person was killed in a different district when his home collapsed.

Berlin's crime rate rises in '95: Berlin's crime rate rose in 1995 after a drop in 1994, and an alarming 78.4 per cent of criminal suspects were aged from eight to .21, according to statistics released by city authorities, Xinhua reports from Berlin.

The number of criminal cases in 1995 hit 580,000, up from 550,000 cases in 1994, but the detection rate also rose from 42 per cent in 1994 to 43 per cent in 1995.

Ex-E German spy denied US visa: former top East German spy has been denied a US visa because he served a government agency that "actively abetted and fostered terrorism," the State Department said Tuesday, AP reports from Washington.

Markus Wolf, as the second ranking official in East Germany's Ministry of State Security, was in a decisionmaking role and therefore was responsible for the actions of that agency, spokesman Glyn Davies said.

"I don't think there was any secret that the government of East Germany was involved with supporting a number of terrorist organisations," Davies added.

Strong quake shakes Beijing: A strong earthquake hit a remote area in the Altai mountains in northwestern Xinjiang early Wednesday, China's Central Seismology Bureau said, AP reports from Beijing.

The magnitude 6.1 earthquake was powerful enough to crack the walls of some houses in the city closest to the quake's epicentre, Altai, but there were no reports of injuries or more serious damage, said Shu Naiging of the Xinjiang

Earthquake Bureau. More than 100 aftershocks, all with a magnitude of less than 3, had been recorded since the quake struck at 2:43 am

for the past six months. fighting had increased in intensity over the last two days, with both sides trading heavy

flowery Arabic, reports AP.

Yet they have shaken Israel

killed 62 people since Febru-

to call a summit on terror

but lethal campaign lies in the

structure of the Islamic mili-

tant group Hamas, — a loose

network of cells without a

strict hierarchy or central

The success of the crude

Wednesday.

OIC calls for int'l efforts towards rehabilitation of ex-Yugoslavia

day meeting organized by an OIC's aid agency on Bosnia ended here yesterday with the adoption of a declaration calling for international efforts towards the rehabilitation of the former Yugoslav republic, reports Xinhua.

The meeting, organised by the Assistance Mobilization Group (AMG) of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) reviewed the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

It agreed that the AMG had in important contribution to make to the effective implementation of the Dayton Peace

agreement. The AMG meeting was attended by representatives from Malaysia, Turkey, Egypt. Iran, Kuwait, Jordan, Guinea, Morocco, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Bosnia Herzegovina and the OIC.

It reaffirmed its completed solidarity with the government and people of Bosnia-Herzegovina in their efforts to establish a just peace and to safeguard security, sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of their

42 killed as

ferry sinks

in China

River ferry that was racing

against two other ships sank in

Sichuan province killing at

least 42 people, sources said

Pengan River Transport Com-

pany was carrying around 100 people when it sank on Mon-

day between the cities of Pen-

Chongqing Evening News said

the disaster happened as the

ferry raced against two other

from behind by the two others

and tipped over." he said,

quoting the captain of the

saved, two bodies were found

and more than 40 people are

missing, probably dead," said a

spokesman for the Chongqing

the sunken vessel was not li-

Another wanted

MQM activist'shot

dead in Karachi

paramilitary rangers shot dead

another wanted activist of the

ethnic Mohajir National Move-

ment (MQM) in Karachi today.

raided the hide-out of Mo-

hammad Shahid, nicknamed

Jinn (spirit), in Mobina town

in Malir district in the early

hours and shot him dead on

launcher and four Kalashnikov

assault rifles were recovered.

Five rockets, a rocket

"Shahid Jinn, who was a

terror in the area, was wanted

in more than a dozen cases of

clashes with police, robberies,

gun-running and kidnapping.

Afghan jets bomb

Taliban positions,

KABUL. Mar 13: Afghan

16 killed

government jets bombed op-

position Taliban militia positions south of Kabul on Tues-

day to repel a rebel offensive

on the eve of the arrival of a

United Nations peace envoy.

government sources said, re-

were killed and wounded in

three air raids in response to

heavy militia shelling, a De-

and military barracks were

mainly targeted," he said.

"According to figures obtained

through radio interception. 16

armed Taliban were killed and

vowed to bring down President

Burhanuddin Rabbani's gov-

ernment, has besieged Kabul

The ministry official said

The Taliban, which has

an unknown number injured."

fence Ministry official said.

Several Taliban fighters

"Their heavy weapons sites

ports Reuter.

one police officer said.

They said rangers had

police said, reports Reuter.

KARACHI, Mar 13: Pakistani

censed to use the Yangtze.

According to the journalist,

A journalist for the

"The leading ferry was hit

"Fifty-five people were

today, reports AFP.

gan and Chongqing.

vessels.

sunken ship.

municipality.

the spot.

they added.

BEIJING, Mar 13: A Yangtze

The ferry belonging to the

multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural country. said the declaration.

It urged OIC member states as well as the international community to actively contribute towards the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

It emphasised the importance of developing public and private sector partnership with Bosnia-Herzegovina in economic, commercial, financial, technical, cultural and other areas so as to strengthen bilateral ties of friendship and cooperation, the declaration added.

The declaration promised full support for the action of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the International Court of Justice against former Yugoslavia for violating the genocide convention and emphasised importance it attached to the work of the International War Crimes Tribunal.

The meeting emphasised that credible deterrence capability of the armed forces of Bosnia-Herzegovina was an essential element in establishing a military balance for en-

suring a stable regional security environment.

It reaffirmed that OIC states, individually and collectively, will contribute to international efforts in implementing the peace agreement and to bring about the desired military balance and stability in the region, while maintaining their own capacity to provide the necessary assistance within the framework of the Dayton agreement.

We have entered the second phase of assistance to Bosnia-Herzegovina and we would seek assistance to the country both individually and collectively," said Pakistan Foreign Office Secretary Najmuddin Sheikh after the meet-

A ministerial meeting of the OIC contact group is expected to be held in Sarajevo in early May to coordinate their assistance efforts for Bosnia-Herzegovina, according to Ahmad Kmail Jaafar, AMG chairman and Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia

AFP from Sarajevo adds,

NATO warned Tuesday of growing tension between Muslims and Croats, the two communities making up Bosnia's federation which controls half

of the country. The problems, a NATO official said, have arisen in central Bosnia in areas where Muslims and Croats fought a bitter 12month war that ended early

"Tensions, if not constant, are rippling backwards and forwards up the valleys lin central Bosnia) as they used to do 1992, 1993, "Brigadier Andrew Cumming, a spokesman for the NATO led peacekeeping force in Bosnia, said.

Cumming said Muslim and Croat police checkpoints were springing up in the Lasva Alley area but also around the towns

of Jajec, Vitez, and Kiseljak. "It is the same areas that began to behave like this in late 1992 that sparked off the fighting between the Muslims and the Croats in 1993. it is very much the fault line between traditional Bosnian Muslim home ground and the Bosnian Croat areas," Cumming

Off the Record

Di denies to be Carling's darling

LONDON: Princess Diana, according to tabloid reports Wednesday, is denying she had a sexual liaison with England rugby captain Will Carling and has asked him to say they weren't lovers, reports AP.

The Daily Express quoted a friend of Diana as saying: "They were neither romantically nor sexually involved." The paper said the unidentified friend was speaking with Diana's authority.

Carling has been England rugby captain for eight years. "He's announced he will quit after Saturday's match against Ireland in the Five Nations tournament but that his decision has nothing to do with his personal life.

His lawyer Hugh Young said Tuesday: "Carling believes that the breakdown of his marriage is an entirely private matter, It

is my client's intention not to comment further." On Tuesday, the Daily Mirror reported that Carling confessed to his wife Julia during an emotional showdown shortly before they separated in September after 1 1/4 years mar-

riage that he had a love affair with Diana last year. But the Daily Express on Wednesday quoted Diana's friend as saying: "They never slept together and as far as Diana is concerned Will Carling is irrelevant."

Too honest to be a thief

KUALA LUMPUR: There will be no questions, though police said the answer is someone preferring a clean conscience

to cash, reports AP. Jamilah Musa's jewelry and cash were wrapped in a bundle and returned several days after they were stolen. The New Straits Times reported Wednesday.

Musa, 62, had given up hope of seeing jewelry worth 3,700 ringgit (1,541 dollars) and 500 ringgit (204 dollars) cash taken from her house in Kuala Trengganu, 300 kilometres (180 miles) northeast of the capital.

She was pleasantly surprised when she stumbled upon a cloth bundle at the back of her house Tuesday, five days after the theft. Trengganu state police public relations officer Superintendent Mokhtaruddin Idrus said.

Unfolding it, she found the cash and jewelry intact. "This is one of those rare cases where the thief decided to

return the loot," Mokhtaruddin said. Asked if the police would continue to look for the thief, he said. "Police consider the ease closed."

Because it talks about sex

NAIROBI: Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi has banned distribution of a family planning book published by the Girl Guides Association of America because it talks about sex, a newspaper said Monday, reports Reuter.

The book, Family Life, was immoral and promoted promiscuity, the privately-owned Daily Nation quoted Moi as saying.

"It talks about sex and I direct that the book be removed from the shelves by the (Kenyan) Girl Guides and the Boy Scouts," the president said in a speech in the northwestern town of Nakuru on Sunday.

In the same speech Moi warned about dangers of overpopulation in the east African nation of 20 million which has one of the highest population growth rates in the world, the paper said.

US carrier Independence stationed east of Taiwan

Avdo Hebib, Interior Minister of the Muslim-Croat federation waves, on Tuesday, as he is

surrounded by federation police, following the official handover of the former Serb-held

Sarajevo suburb of llidza. Serb arsonists have in recent days torched dozens of buildings in

llidza while organised gangs of thugs have moved through the district looting and

JAKARTA, Mar 13: The US armed missile not far from carrier Independence has Taiwan's southern port of been stationed east of Taiwan Kaohsiung today after firing as a precaution, the comman- three missiles last Friday. The der of the US Seventh Fleet vice-admiral Archie Clemins,

intimidating those who wanted to stay.

said today, reports Reuter. "We have the independent battle group there as a preventive measure to make sure no miscalculation takes place in that part of the world," he told a news conference in Jakarta.

"We are already in international waters and the fleet is located about 110 miles (175 km) east of Taiwan," Clemins

"It is inappropriate for me to speculate on what would happen or what we would do if a miscalculation would happen," he said. China fired a fourth un-

Beijing also began a weeklong live-fire military exercise in a large are of sea off Taiwan on Tuesday. AFP from Tokyo add

pendence.

Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto said today that Japanese concern over China-Taiwan tensions was deepening although the crisis provided a good opportunity" to seek Chinese support for regional stability.

tests are meant as warning to

Taipei against trying for inde-

"Our concern is deepening over the drills which are being stepped, up. We have to keep reiterating our expressions of

strong concern and interest. he told parliament as China fired a new missile a target zone off the Taiwanese port of Kaohsiung a day after launching war games in the area.

- AFP/UNB photo

Hashimoto, who met Chinese Premier Li Peng in Bangkok earlier this month, told the lower-house foreign affairs committee he would again call for restraint when Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen visits Tokyo this month.

"We are concerned about the situation in the Taiwan Strait and are asking for restraint by both sides. I believe it's a good opportunity to seek China's cooperation for regional peace and stability." he

Iraq denies detaining Kuwaiti POWs BAGHDAD, Mar 13: Iraq invasion and to other foreign detainees in its jails. Kuwait claims that 604 -

said Tuesday it has released all Kuwaiti Prisoners of War as well as other foreigners held in its jails, reports AFP.

official, quoted by the official news agency INA, denied a. claim by the chairman of the Kuwaiti committee on missing and Prisoners of War. Sheikh Salem al-Sabah, that Kuwaiti ·POWs are still being held.

The Iraqi official said: "Iraq has set free all Kuwaiti and other Prisoners of War and detainees," adding that they had numbered 11,000. The Iraqi official said : "Iraq

has set free all Kuwaiti and other Prisoners of War, and detainees," adding that they had numbered 11.000:

He was referring both to prisoners taken during Iraq's seven month occupation of Kuwait after its August 1990

comprising 549 Kuwaitis plus nationals from 10 other coun-An Iraqi Foreign Ministry tries - have been detained by the Baghdad authorities since the Iraqi occupation.

Previously, Iraq had stated it had taken 73 Kuwaiti, Prisoners, but it claimed it had since lost trace of them. Sheikh Salem said Monday

he had been told that Prisoners of War were still being held in Iraq by senior Iraqi official Hussein Kamel Hassan after he defected to Jordan last year.

But the Iraqi official said "The Kuwaiti official is not interested in setting the prisoners issue, but uses it for known political ends. He is calling for the continuation of the unjust embargo imposed on iraq's after its invasion of Kuwait.

Rao accused of cover-up in \$ 18 m bribery scandal

NEW DELHI, Mar 13: India's opposition parties on Tuesday accused Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao of a cover-up in an 18 million dollars bribery scandal in which he has been named, reports The charges were levelled

during parliament's last meeting before an election, expected in May and likely to focus on the affair. Rao looked grim as he sat

through an opposition-sponsored discussion on the incident which has already forced the resignation of several ministers and opposition leaders. He did not respond as op-

position leaders repeatedly asked him: "Are you under investigation or not?" Asked by former prime up," said Jaswant Singh, a seminister Chandra Shekhar if

he had been probed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the affair, Rao said: "The question should be posed to the CBI."

The prime minister drew derisive laughter from the opposition when he tried to explain his stand . "I cannot give you the de-

tails because I do not have details of the investigation," he said, apparently referring to a recent Indian Supreme Court order effectively asking the CBI not to reports the case to

Rao has been named as a beneficiary in the "hawala" affair by a key witness in the case but his Congress Party says he is innocent. "It is nothing but a cover-

nior lawmaker for the

rightwing Hindu Bharativa Janata Party (BJP). "The prime minister's reply is highly unsatisfactory," he

Most opposition members walked out after Rao's cryptic reply, paving the way for their motion criticising his handling of the scandal to be voted out by the remaining Congress members.

The affair stemmed from lottings in the diaries of an alleged money laundered which contained the names of politicians and bureaucrats said to have received money from him. The CBI seized the diaries in May 1991.

June that year at the head of a minority Congress Party government.

Int'l Terrorism Summit won't stop bomb attack' BEIRUT, Mar 13 : The

Palestinian radical group Islamic Jihad warned Tuesday that the International Terrorism Summit in Egypt would not stop suicide bomb attacks in Israel, reports AFP. The group, which claimed

the latest suicide bombing in Tel Aviv on March 4, said in a statement that the "holy war" against Israel would continue. "Our suicide attacks in Is-

rael will only disappear with their cause: namely the continued zionist occupation and aggression of our land and people," the statement issued from Jerusalem said.

It described today's summit in the Red Sea resort of Sharm El-Sheikh, to be co-hosted by US President Bill Clinton and Rao came took office in | Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, was a "crusade against Islam mounted by the United States and its heir, Israel."

The summit was called after a wave of suicide bombings in Israel in which a total of 61 people died. World leaders are to discuss forging a united front against terrorism and salvaging the battered peace * process. But Islamic Jihad said: "It

is doomed to failure, and will not succeed in saving" Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat as well as their hopeless projects.' "Peres, Arafat and Clinton

must know that our Islamic bombs, who have defeated their nuclear arsenal, do not target the so-called peace process in the region.

It said the summit was aimed at giving international legitimacy to the "organised terrorism" practices by Israel. and to wipe out "the new wave of Jihad heroes.

French Polynesian authorities to return five Greenpeace ships

(1843 GMT Tuesday), Shu said.

PAPEETE, Tahiti, Mar 13: French Polynesian authorities this week will return five Greenpeace ships seized last fall in high-seas protests of France's nuclear testing pro-

The international environmental group had demanded the return of the five vessels. They were boarded and confiscated by authorities after the ships strayed too close to test sites in the South Pacific.

the Rainbow Warrior II and the MV Greenpeace next week.

'Suicide bomb squads aimed at derailing ME peace process' JERUSALEM. Mar 13: They makers' jobs all the tougher are few in number. They craft they may strike a peace with. bombs from fertilizer, nails one Hamas unit but face atand dynamite scraped from old tacks from another. land mines. They distribute

artillery fire.

Hamas disparate elements threatening leaflets written in share the goal of derailing the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and establishing an Iswith suicide attacks that have lamic fundamentalist state in all of historic Palestine-Israel. ary 25. And they have put the the West Bank and Gaza. Be-Middle East's peacemakers on yond that, there is little cohethe defensive, promoting them

David Among, a retired Israeli general who was the army's chief anti-terror adviser during the 1987-93 Palestinian uprising, says Hamas was not one organisation but many, with many of the cells. forming around a local clergy-

That structure has allowed "The organizations are the group's leaders to evade an based on a local hero or local intense manhunt by Israeli leader who is perceived to be soldiers and Palestinian police. religiously enlightened. He It has also made the peacestarts to teach people around ance and orders from Hamas

him, and is connected in a sort of network to other such groups," Agmon said.

Hamas political groups are separate from its social welfare organisations - schools, charities, medical centres — and from the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades, the group's military

"The Izzedine, named after who was killed during the British occupation in the 1930s, is made up of a few dozen active members broken into semi-autonomous cells in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The different elements in Palestinian areas receive support from abroad, often channeled directly into the specific organisation without going through a central Hamas structure. Izzedine leaders get guidleaders in Iran. Sudan. Syria. Lebanon, Yemen and elsewhere.

Donors in the United States, England and Arab oil countries like Saudi Arabia send money to Hamas charities, schools, mosques and medical clinics.

Israeli officials estimate that about 5 per cent of the money finds its way into the hands of terror cells.

The leadership abroad can easily send money and orders to the suicide bomber himself and a cell leader without the local political leadership knowing about it," said Maj Gen. Abdel Razzak Majaida, head of Palestinian national security. "Even the leaslets come from abroad.

Majaida said the external leadership — in Iran, Jordan and Syria - often bypassed the local Hamas leaders with

whom Yaser Arafat's government has been seeking an agreement to halt attacks on

The directions from abroad are general, and the local cells are left to recruit suicide attackers and determine the target and exact timing of the operation, Agmon said.

Also improvised are the weapons, usually 20 to 30 pounds (about 10 kilograms) of dynamite or homemade explosives in a vest or belt with a simple detonator. The explosive is studded with nails. making it more deadly. The operations are not sophisticated and often go amiss. In April 1995, a Hamas bomb factory in Gaza blew up and killed six people, including a wanted militant. Another bomb factory was uncovered by Israel's Shin Bet secret service in the Wet Bank last August after two sui-

people. * The most important ingredient is the person willing to commit suicide.

Israel's Shin Bet chief, Maj. Gen. Ami Ayalon, told parlia ment recently that there were hundreds of volunteers waiting to join the ranks of the suicide bombers

Many are from Palestinian refugee camps, where jobs are scarce and futures bleak. They are recruited from the faithful at Hamas run mosques and promised a heavenly paradise for themselves and a steady income for the families they leave behind

Arafat's forces have arrested more than 500 Hamas activists, and Palestinian sources say Arafat plans to close the 4.000-student Islamic University, a Hamas centre in Gaza

Army arrest 12 Muslim militants cide bombings that killed 16 in West Bank JERUSALEM, Mar 13: The

Israeli army said today it had arrested 12 suspected Muslim militants in the West Bank overnight as part of a crackdown launched after a wave of suicide bombings by the Islamic group Hamas, reports Reuter. It said it, made the arrests

in a sweep through several villages under Israeli security control near the self-ruled Palestinian town of Ramallah and Israeli-occupied Hebron. About 280 suspected militants have been arrested since March 3. the army said.

Palestinian security forces said they have arrested more than 600 Hamas supporters or activists in the last two weeks. Hamas suicide bombers

have killed 58 people in Israel since February 25

gramme.

France's underground nuclear Authorities said they would hand over three impounded vessels on Wednesday - the Vega. the Manutea and the Ribaude — and would return