## Iraq accuses US, UK of trying to sabotage its deal with UN

BAGHDAD, Mar 1: Iraq accused Britain and the United States Saturday of trying to sabotage its deal to defuse the arms inspection crisis as the commander of US forces in the Gulf said his troops will stay on standby for a military strike, reports AFP.

General Anthony Zinni said his troops ready to take on Iraq if Baghdad does not apply its accord on arms inspections with the United Nations, brokered by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in Baghdad last weekend.

"We are notstanding down or anything," the official Kuwaiti news agency KUNA quoted Zinni as saying.

"We are just staying ready and paying attention to what is going on," he added.

KUNA also quoted the US commander as saying "the use of military force is an option we will use if we don't get compliance and cooperation, but only in those circumstances.' Meanwhile, Iraqi Oil Minis-

ter Amer Rashid said a British attempt to incorporate the threat of military force into the UN-Baghdad deal was "totally

unnecessary." "This move by the British administration, supported by the American administration, is totally unnecessary. They are doing it for a purely political agenda which they have against lraq," Rashid told a press con-

ference in Baghdad. Britain presented a revised version of its draft UN Security Council resolution Friday that threatens Iraq with "very serious consequences" if it violates the agreement on UN weapons inspections of presidential

"They (the Americans) want to undermine the sovereignty of Iraq." they want to break Iraq. they want to control the oil

The deal agreed by Annan on a last-ditch mission to stave off a US military strike on Iraq provides for a "special group" of diplomats and disarmament

experts from the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) to inspect presidential sites.

Iraq had previously declared the sites off limits to UNSCOM inspectors on sovereignty grounds, leading Washington to threaten military action unless Baghdad backed down and granted UNSCOM unfettered access to all sites.

Under ceasefire terms ending the 1991 Gulf War, UNSCOM must certify that Iraq no longer has any weapons of mass destruction before UN sanctions imposed on the country after its invasion of Kuwait can be

Rashid insisted Iraq was prepared to work with UNSCOM and its outspoken chief Richard Butler, who is expected in Iraq in the next few weeks, and to have a "constructive relationship" with the body.

But he warned: They have to work according to the mandate of UN Security Council resolutions. Outside this we will have problems."

Nigeria, Cameroon will appear before ICJ today

THE HAGUE, March 1: Nigeria and Cameroon will appear before the International Court of Justice on Monday in an attempt to resolve a dispute over which country owns an oil-rich peninsula in the Gulf of Guinea, reports AFP.

Cameroon filed a suit with the International Court of Justice (ICJ), a UN body based in The Hague, in 1994 to try to establish its ownership of the Bakassi peninsula, a claim that Nigeria hotly contests.

Delegations from the two African countries, led by Cameroon's Justice Minister Laurent Essoand his Nigerian counterpart Abdullahi Ibrahim, will put their case to the court in hearings between March 2-11.

The dispute over the 1,000 square kilometres (400-square mile) peninsula, which is rich in oil and fish, has prompted several bloody clashes since the two countries stationed troops there in 1994.

Almost 40 people have died in the fighting.



Cuban President Fidel Castro receives Spanish Socialist leader Joaquin Almunia Saturday for a dinner at the Revolution Palace in Havana, on the fifth day of the Socialist Party leader's trip to Cuba. Almunia is invited by the Cuban Communist Party. In the centre is Cuban protocol member Angel Reigosa De La Cruz.

- AP/UNB photo

## BJP hopes to forge clear Pressure mounting on Priyanka majority in parliament

nationalists today vowed to form India's next government as an exit poll following marathon national elections put them within arm's length of seizing power, reports AFP.

The right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) the country's dominant political force said it hoped to forge a clear majority in the 545-seat parliament after three weeks of voting wound up Saturday.

The exit poll, by an independent research agency and broadcast on state-run Indian television, said the BJP and its dozen allies were set to win 244 seats in a hung parliament.

That would set them just 29 seat short of a decisive major-Most of the election results

are expected on Tuesday, 24 hours after the start of count-

India, the world's largest democracy is electing its fifth government within two years following a sting of weak coali-

Around 330 million of 605 million eligible voters a 55 per cent turnout — took part in nationwide balloting.

But BJP general secretary M Venkaiah Naidu claimed that

NEW DELHI, Mar 1: Hindu the party was poised to form a government after its election campaign on a pledge of politi-

"We are hoping to cross 270 seats along with our allies", Naidu told AFP. This is our reading.

"We hope to do better than projected by the (television) exit poll in some states and end up with a clear majority.

One thing is clear from all opinion and exit polls — the mode is in favour of BJP. The Congress dismissed the

exit poll predictions.

Meanwhile, thousands of Indian officials will start counting tomorrow around 330 million votes cast in national elections in the biggest exercise of its kind in the world, authorities said today.

Election Commission officials will start the count across 1,400 centres in 870 towns. The count will cover 536 of India's 545 parliamentary con-

stituencies autonomous Election Commission said here. India, the world's largest democracy, went to the polls on February 16, 22 and 28, a handful of seats remain to be decided in northern areas.

About 55 per cent of eligible

voters cast their ballot during the elections amid scattered violence which claimed some 60 lives.

Ballot boxes were sealed after each phase of balloting and taken from rural areas and remote villages to neighboring towns where they were kept under heavy security.

Two seats in the country's far east have already been counted. They were won by the Congress, India's oldest party.

Election Commission officials said although the counting process would start at 8:00 am (0230 GMT) across India, the first results would only roll in during the afternoon.

Election officials first mix ballots from boxes so that parties cannot discover which areas supported or opposed them. The ballots are collected in bundles of 10,000 each before the count.

In some large constituencies the process can take up to 24 hours. When the count is on, election officials are surrounded by representatives of leading candidates to prevent tampering.

For the first time, results will be published on the Internet at www, eci, gov, in.

## to enter politics

NEW DELHI, Mar Priyanka Gandhi, the next generation of India's Gandhi-Nehru political dynasty, is under increasing pressure to enter politics, reports AFP.

In a sign of easing tensions

in the region, the United Na-

tions decided to allow its Bagh-

dad-based staff to bring back

dependents pulled out during

morning that those regular pro-

gramme one staff in Baghdad

can bring back their depen-dents, UN humanitarian affairs

coordinator Denis Halliday

"I think this is a very posi-tive sign," he told around 60

staff who returned to Baghdad

Thursday after being redeployed

to Amman for a week on the

very day Annan arrived in

Baghdad to negotiate a peaceful

back to normal," he said.

"I think the situation now is

Halliday also announced

Iraqi Foreign Minister Mo-

hammed Said al-Sahhaf will

meet with Annan to discuss the

enhanced oil-for-food pro-

gramme approved by the UN Se-

told UN staff Saturday.

end to the crisis.

curity Council.

"We now have a decision this

the crisis.

The Congress Party, which led India to independence in 1947 and has ruled the country for 45 of the next 50 years, persuaded Priyanka's mother Sonia, the widow of assassinated former premier Rajiv Gandhi, to campaign in national polls. Now it is beginning to look

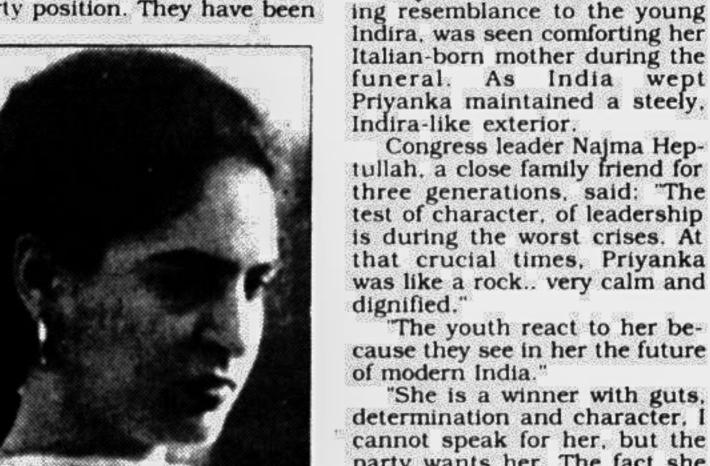
to the future - and to the 26year-old Priyanka. "Here is a fresh, intelligent young lady who has an electrifying effect in the minds of the people." Congress spokesman

Ved Prakash said. Prakash said Priyanka whose father Rajiv Gandhi. grandmother Indira Gandhi and great-grandfather Jawaharalal Nehru were all prime ministers, was born to lead.

"In India there is a feeling that when you are in your mother's womb the impressions of the surroundings and the family atmosphere come through to the child." Prakash said.

"Politics is natural to her, leadership is in the family's

blood. The Congress leadership and rank-and-file will be overjoyed if she finally takes up a party position. They have been



waiting for this for years. Priyanka Gandhi, who like her mother has shunned media interviews, is a former kinder-

garten teacher who had seemed contentedly set for a life of quit

anonymity. But her grit came to light in

"She is a winner with guts, determination and character, I cannot speak for her, but the

party wants her. The fact she campaigned shows she knows her duty, to the party and to the country. Priyanka, an average stu-

1991 when Rajiv Gandhi was

Indira, was seen comforting her

Priyanka, who bears a strik-

Congress leader Najma Hep-

is during the worst crises. At

was like a rock.. very calm and

cause they see in her the future

The youth react to her be-

assassinated.

Indira-like exterior.

dent, first came to public notice when she decided to marry a businessman from an ordinary Indian family last year and become a housewife.

But her mother's surprise decision to campaign for the Congress in the elections made her a national figure.

## Off the Record

#### Anti-fur campaign

HONG KONG: Two naked women in an anti-fur protest were led away by Hong Kong police minutes after they emerged to cross a busy street in the central business district on Saturday, reports Reuter.

The two women, members of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) painted their nude bodies with leopard spots, drew cat-like whiskers on their whitened cheeks and carried a banner reading "Only animals should wear fur." The women were escorted away in a police van after being

told they were disturbing the public order. In a statement, stripper Karla Waples said "By showing some of our skin, we hope to save animals' skins, fur coats used to be a status symbol, but now they're a social liability."

PETA's "Rather go naked than wear fur" campaign has led to protesters marching "au naturel" for a animals in Tokyo, Paris, Milan, New York, London and Moscow,

### Six instead of nine

MEXICO CITY: A woman who caused a sensation earlier this year when her doctor said she was pregnant with nine babies gave birth on Saturday to six, hospital officials in Mexico City said, reports Reuter.

"At 2:30 pm (2030 GMT) she gave birth to six babies, three boys and three girls, said hospital spokeswoman Maria Eugenia Gutierrez, "all are in good health."

Doctors originally thought Cristina Hernandez, 28 and already the mother of a 10-year old girl, was carrying nine fetuses,

but later they said subsequent tests showed seven. However, a hospital spokeswoman told Reuters on Saturday that Hernandez had given birth to six babies in all. "The impression there were seven came from a little shadow

on the ultrasound image," said spokeswoman Maureen Garibay. Adding that the babies were delivered by caesarean section. Born three months premature, all are in incubators and the

mother is well although still in intensive care, she added.

40 arrested in Myanmar

Junta breaks up alleged

plot to bomb govt bldgs

Col. Kyaw Thein, said Sunday

the plot was masterminded by

the All Burma Students Demo-

cratic Front, made up of former

students who fled the suppres-

sion of a pro-democracy upris-

tee, told a news conference that

the student insurgents were

linked to the party of pro-

democracy leader Aung San Suu

National League for Democracy,

Myo Thant and Pol Khwa, had

Bridge across

Yamuna opens

countries like India, China,

Japan and Korea should develop

an "Asian vision" for all round

development of the region. Vice

President Krishan Kani said

crore Japan aided "New Niza-

muddin Bridge" across the Ya-

muna river here, he said the vi-

sion would go a long way in re-

taining indigenous skills

within the country preventing

talents from seeking greener

Vice President suggested a

pastures in western countries.

new management system for

the people of the region as a

which, he said, is a big market.

not only a maker of friendship

but one of understanding be-

tween the two countries with

dia as a land of excellence, the

people of India valued Japanese

technology and knowhow, he said lauding completion of the

bridge in record 24 months and

bridge provides a vital link be-

tween Delhi and its satellite

township of Ghaziabad and

Noida across the river and is

expected to provide the much

needed relief to the people of

trans Yamuna who had a har-

rowing time commuting to the

grant-in-aid for the bridge

which was a separate three-me-

tre wide cycle track on either

Japan provided Rs 90 crore

city daily.

The 551-metre four-lane

that too ahead of schedule.

long traditional ties.

whole and particularly India

He said the new bridge was

While Japan considered In-

Inaugurating the Rs 100

Saturday, reports PTI.

NEW DELHI, Mar 1: Asian

He said two members of her

ing in 1988.

ernment.

Kyi.

# Bangladesh Ambassador to the Republic of Korea Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser seen

congratulating President-elect Dr Kim Dae Jung by shaking hands recently.

reports from Belgrade.

## army to fight immigrants

KUALA LUMPUR, Mar 1: A regional official wants 45,000 army reservists to help police keep illegal immigrants from entering the country, a newspa-

per said Sunday, reports AP. Shahidan Kassim, chief minister of the northwestern state of Perlis, has urged the Defence Ministry to mobilise the Territorial Army to secure coastal areas and land borders. the New Sunday Times reported. That army is made up of men and women who have received military training in off hours from work.

In the past two weeks, 3,036 illegal immigrants have been arrested for entering the country. Nearly 9,000 illegal immigrants were caught in all of last

A senior marine police officer was quoted by another newspaper, The Star, as saying the number of illegal immigrants has jumped sharply because of the poor economic situation in neighbouring countries.

Police have urged villagers along the west coast of peninsular Malaysia to be vigilant and alert authorities if they sight any landings of suspected illegal immigrants.

About 100 marine police boats are patrolling the 2,000kilometre (1,250-mile) coastline around the clock.

Inspector General of Police Rahim Noor, Malaysia's top police officer, said foreign workers were helping recent illegal immigrants by sheltering them, sometimes in tunnels, the Sunday Star reported.

# Malaysian police seek help from

Arab League hails ICJ ruling: Egypt and the Arab League hailed Saturday the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for ruling that the Court has jurisdiction to decide where two Libyan suspects in the 1998 Lockerbie bombing stand

trial, AFP reports from Cairo. Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Mussa called the court decision "an important step toward clearing up this case." He told reporters that "Even though the ICJ has not said its last word," the Lockerbie affair requires "A new approach" by all sides.

Chiapas announces plan for peace: More than four years after an Indian rebelled shook the southern state of Chiapas, the state governor announced a plan he said would bring peace and economic reconstruction to the area. AP reports from Tuxtla Gutierrez, Mexico.

Political opponents called the peace plan a blueprint for further confrontation in a state where hundreds have died in politically motivated violence. They particularly criticised the plan's proposals for a crackdown on some forms of protest. Also Saturday, international observers ended a 15-day tour of Chiapas and said they will name a report being compiled on human rights abuses in the region after an Indian who was murdered - apparently by a pro-government paramilitary gang just hours after they interviewed him.

2 Serb cops, 5 others killed: Two Serbian policemen and five Kosovo Albanians were killed in clashes on Saturday after a police patrol came under attack in Kosovo province, Serbian polices said in a statement, Reuter

The statement, issued by the Serbian Interior Ministry, said the two policemen were killed and two were seriously wounded when the patrol was ambushed near the village of Likosane at noon. "Repelling the attack, the Interior Ministry's members killed five terrorists. Police are still searching for other members of the terrorist gang of Albanian separatists," the state news agency Tanjug quoted the statement as saying.

30 killed in Algeria: Thirty people — including 19 armed Islamist extremists — have been killed in Algeria, the country's security forces said Saturday, AFP reports from Algiers.

The 19 extremists were killed in the western towns of Saida and Sidi Bel Abbes after four residents in the area were abducted and murdered by a "terrorist group," a statement said. The security officials had earlier announced that seven other citizens had been murdered overnight in Ouled-Aissa, some 80 kilometers (50 miles) south of Algiers near Medea.

#### Homeless using Internet in US to support survival sites around the city.

SAN FRANCISCO, Mar 1: Thousands of homeless people here and throughout the United States are using the Internet to fight their way back into society's mainstream, reports AFP.

"The Internet is a godsend." Anitra Freeman, 48, said in an E-mail message. Suffering from manic depression. Freeman lived on the streets for four months after she lost her programming job at

Boeing, now she is an activist

for homeless people in Seattle, Washington. "I have seen people become more self-confident, more alert and more outspoken after spending a few months navigating the Internet, and I have seen them apply that new confidence to off-line successes as well, she

Activists say homeless people on the Internet gain not only an address but also an invaluable source of information and contacts without fear of being rejected because of their appearance.

Libraries and groups that help the homeless now offer internet access, and the San Francisco Public Library makes available a list of these

Five killed in

Kashmir violence

SRINAGAR, Mar 1: At least

five persons, including three

members of the ruling National

Conference (NC), were killed

and 20 others wounded across

Kashmir valley in violent inci-

dents shortly after polling

ended in a Srinagar Lok Sabha

The NC block president of

Wakoora-Ganderbal in the

home constituency of Chief

Minister Dr Farooq Abdullah

was shot dead by unidentified

militants their evening, official

Mohiuddin Mir, a resident of

Wagra Buramullah and worker

Abdul Rahman Lone were shot

dead by militants who fired at

their vehicle at Singapora-Pat-

Singapora-Pattan falls in

Baramulla constituency, going

to the polls on March seven

along with Anantanag and

and five-year-old Riaz Ahmad

were killed and 20 others

wounded when a bomb exploded

in a vehicle hired by Jammu

and Kashmir Awami League at

Sopore, 55 km from Srinagar,

set on fire by miscreants at

Kanikadal area of interior Sri-

nagar this evening while a polling booth was damaged

when militants bombed it after

polling ended at Saita Katal

Rainwari in downtown Srina-

Two migrants housed were

Six-year-old Ahmad Khan

Part block Secretary Gulam

constituency Saturday.

sources told PTI.

tan, they said.

the sources said.

The shelter is the first obvious level of service," said Erick Swenson, spokesman for the Episcopal Sanctuary, a group founded by the Episcopal

Church and a computer pioneer "It meets people's basic needs. But we must help people move further to self-sufficiency." Struggling with an addiction to crack cocaine, Tedrico Latham arrived in San Francisco last year after four years

of drifting across some 26

"If had no E-mail address, I would have felt identity-less and truly alone out there." Latham said. There is nothing in existence that isn't covered. commented on, and made available on the Internet. The Internet is my first reference source for anything I need to

"Once I discovered how powerful an E-mail address, coupled with a web page, could be, I used it as an incentive and selfmotivation to rise above my situation," he said. Latham said he frequented libraries when the shelters were closed and scoured the Internet for information.

know.

## doesn't want to be king'

LONDON, Mar 1: Fifteenported, reports Reuter.

The tabloid People quoted senior palace aides as saying William, a schoolboy at Éton College, had become more resistant to the prospect of assuming the British throne since the death of his mother, Princess

succession to his grandmother. Queen Elizabeth, after Charles.

as a frustrated young man. "when he looks at the royal

the misery with the institution that his mother was part of and father is still. That feel is deepseated and he gets angry and tearful about it."

A Kashmir separatist holds on to his rocks as he is overwhelmed by an exploding tear gas canister during clashes in Srinagar, India, Saturday during the fourth phase of Indian general elections. Clashes erupted after separatists had called for a boycott of the elections in this predominantly Muslim region of northern India. - AP/UNB photo | side.

# 'Prince William

year-old Prince William has told his father Prince Charles he does not want to be king, a British Sunday newspaper re-

Diana, six months ago. William is second in line of

The People, in a front-page story, quoted a senior royal courtier as describing William

family all he has seen in recent years is misery," the report "He has associated a lot of

YANGON, Mar 1: Myanmar's student group and gone undermilitary regimes has arrested ground last November. 40 people it accuses of planning to bomb government buildings

Suu Kyi, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, has stressed that and embassies and assassinate she is seeking a non-violent way to bring democracy to the country's leaders, reports Myanmar. Kyaw then said no action A government spokesman,

has been taken against Suu Kyi's party but that the regime wanted to "highlight NLD's obvious link with the illegal organisation." Fuses concealed in cigarettes and some explosives that the

colonel said were seized from

He said that among those ar-Ko Thein were exhibited at the rested in January was law gradspecial news conference. uate Ko Thein, described as the The military officer said the leader of a plot to "undermine insurgents were hoping to place public confidence in the govbombs at government buildings Kyaw Thein, a member of the regime's information commit-

and embassies of members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which has taken a generally pro-regime stance and accepted Myanmar into the economic grouping. Thein Tun, described as the leader of the student front's "Unit 207," entered Burma from

the Thai border area last De-

cember after earlier receiving

The spokesman did not say

when the group would her tried.

established contact with the training in explosives from the Karen National Union, an ethnic minority rebel group also fighting the central government.



vealing wrap wedding gown is worn by this model for Lorenzo Riva during Fall/Winter '98/99 fashion collection presented in Milan Saturday.

- AP/UNB photo