

International

Indonesian students urge military to support their protests against Suharto

JAKARTA, Apr 3: Hundreds of Indonesian students rallied yesterday urging the military to support their protests against President Suharto's 32-year rule, reports AFP.

demonstrating and that his officers would be available for discussions. "University of Indonesia rejects dialogue with ABRI," one banner at the rally said.

India denies losing 8 soldiers Indo-Pak troops exchange fires along Kashmir border

ISLAMABAD, Apr 3: Pakistani and Indian forces fought an artillery duel on their contested Kashmir frontier that left eight Indian soldiers dead, military sources said today, reports AFP.

International law bars the construction of fences or concrete bunkers at the boundary, they said. However, they dismissed the incident as a "routine" occurrence in the region.



Foreign Ministers of Pakistan Gohar Ayub, right, and Turkey Ismail Cem exchanged copies of agreements after a signing ceremony, Thursday at the Foreign Office in Islamabad. They signed a Memorandum of Understanding on measures to further strengthen the close fraternal and cooperative ties between Pakistan and Turkey. — AP/UNB photo



Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair with his Japanese counterpart Ryutaro Hashimoto in Downing Street, Thursday. The Japanese Premier is in London to attend the ASEM Summit. — AP/UNB photo

UN experts complete searches of Saddam's eight palaces

BAGHDAD, Apr 3: UN arms experts have successfully completed the first searches of President Saddam Hussein's eight palaces, the head of the diplomatic group monitoring the visits said Friday, reports AP.

The mission "was professionally concluded. As far as the experts are concerned, they were able to fulfill their mandated task," said Dhanapala, the UN's top disarmament expert.

As asked for the two sides have passed the first hurdle in testing the Feb 23 accord, Dhanapala said, "I would confirm that." The accord obliged the arms inspectors for the first time to be monitored by a multinational group of 20 diplomats whenever they visited any of the eight presidential complexes, in a gesture aimed at safeguarding Iraq's dignity.

'US too tolerant of HR abuses in Indonesia'

WASHINGTON, Apr 3: The United States is too tolerant of widespread human rights abuses in Indonesia and should not allow the country to benefit from billions in International Monetary Fund loans until it changes its ways, a group of bipartisan US congress members said, reports AP.

Reaction over dismissal of lawsuit against Clinton

WASHINGTON, Apr 3: Ready to move on, many Americans seem to be breathing a sigh of relief that Paula Jones' lawsuit against President Bill Clinton won't go to trial — and they'd like to see the Monica Lewinsky investigation wrapped up, too, reports AP.

that Americans don't have much stomach for investigating the president's personal conduct. A USA Today-CNN-Gallup poll conducted after the Jones case was dismissed on Wednesday found that 63 per cent of Americans thought federal Judge Susan Webber Wright did the right thing in throwing out the case while 25 per cent thought she made the wrong call.

Iran, Iraq exchange a total of 862 prisoners so far

BAGHDAD, Apr 3: Iran and Iraq exchanged nearly 900 prisoners of war late Thursday, the official Iraqi news agency reported. It appeared to be the first stage of a swap of some 6,000 prisoners announced by the two countries earlier in the day, reports AP.

The Iraqi agency said 800 Iraqis were freed by Iran at the al-Mundhariya border crossing, 160 kilometers (100 miles) northeast of Baghdad. Simultaneously, Iran released 62 Iranian prisoners.



Khmer Rouge soldiers stand by a crashed Royal Cambodian Air Force helicopter Wednesday after it struck two landmines while attempting to land at Preah Vihear, a remote former Khmer Rouge base. — AP/UNB photo

Ranariddh demands improved security to run credible polls campaign

PHNOM PENH, Apr 3: Ending his first violence-marred visit to Cambodia since being deposed as co-premier, Prince Norodom Ranariddh demanded improved security to run a credible election campaign Friday and questioned the July 26 polling date, reports AP.

Milosevic for referendum on Kosovo mediation

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia, Apr 3: Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic blasted the West for interfering in Kosovo and Thursday urged a referendum on whether foreigners can mediate talks on the future of the troubled province, reports AP.

of foreign mediation, Milosevic is likely to try to dictate terms to the Albanians far short of the independence they seek. The United States and its European allies have warned Milosevic that he risks stiffer economic sanctions by rebuffing efforts to resolve the crisis in Kosovo.

9 women drowned in India: Nine women labourers travelling in a tractor-drawn trolley were drowned Friday when their vehicle veered off the road and plunged into a river near the western Indian town of Nasik.

Rescuers found six bodies while a search was on for the three remaining bodies in the Kukadi river in Maharashtra state, Press Trust of India said quoting police officials. The area is 1,000 kilometres (620 miles) from New Delhi. Twelve of the 21 women, who were crammed in the trolley, were rescued by villagers. The tractor went out of control after a mechanical fault, Press Trust said.

The Women's National Health Protection Movement said the number of juvenile drug takers was increasing, with up to 800 children aged seven to 10 registered in the Moscow police bureau as drug users. In the meantime, drug trafficking has spread rampantly. Over the last two years, the number of people arrested on the grounds of drug production and trafficking has doubled.

Oscars returning to Hollywood permanently

HOLLYWOOD, Apr 3: The Oscars are returning to Hollywood in a new theater that will be the permanent home of the annual film awards extravaganza, Los Angeles city officials said on Thursday, reports Reuters.

HK govt satisfied with first round of voting

HONG KONG, Apr 3: The government said Friday that it was generally satisfied with a first round of voting that will lead to legislative elections in May, saying the exercise had gone smoothly despite low voter interest and criticism from democrats, reports AP.

Commentators said the low turnout reflected public apathy in the face of a complex, new electoral system. But Hong Kong's leader, Tung Chee-hwa, said he was encouraged by the turnout.

2m drug addicts in Russia: Russia has a total of two million drug addicts and another four million people who used to be drug abusers, a women's health group said on Thursday, Xinhua reports from Moscow.

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UK apologises for its 'insensitive' treatment of Nazi victims

LONDON, Apr 3: Britain apologized Friday for its "insensitive" treatment of 25,000 Nazi victims whose assets were seized during World War II, and promised a new compensation plan, reports AP.

Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, said the claims programme aimed to pay 100 million dollars owed to former Nazi victims, mainly Jews from Eastern Europe.

The report said that at the outset of World War II, Britain passed the Trading with the Enemy Act, freezing all assets belonging to Germany and its allies. A total of 587 million dollars, in 1939 exchange rates, was seized.

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Shimon Peres in Beijing: Former Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres arrived in Beijing yesterday for a five-day visit, Xinhua reported, AFP says from Beijing.

Peres, honorary president of the Council for the Promotion of Israel-China Relations, was welcomed by Vice Premier Qian Qichen, and is to visit a mosque before leaving next Wednesday. Peres' successor as prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, is to visit China from May 26 to 28.

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Former chief of NSP held in ROK: South Korea's former intelligence chief was arrested early yesterday for his role in a smear campaign prior to last year's presidential election, Reuters reports from Seoul.

Known Young-hae, a former director of the agency for National Security Planning (NSP), was arrested shortly after midnight in the hospital where he was recovering from a suicide attempt two weeks ago.

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