



Debris of a single-engine sports plane left from a NATO attack, litters a hangar of the aeronautical factory UTVA in Pančevo, 15km east of Belgrade on Wednesday. NATO's first targets in Yugoslavia included the Zastava vehicle and weaponry plant and the aeronautical factory near Belgrade.

— AFP photo

## 'Secret Islamic group active in Malaysia to oust Mahathir'

KUALA LUMPUR, Mar 25: A secret Islamic organisation has infiltrated political parties, universities, youth and religious groups aiming to oust the government through political and ethnic unrest, a report said today.

The shadowy group was believed to be funded by foreigners, Islamic Centre Director-General Abdul Hamid Zainal Abidin told The Sun newspaper.

The Islamic Centre is attached to the department of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad who said last week that unidentified groups were trying to incite Muslims in the country to 'wage war' and kill him.

Abdul Hamid said the targeted sectors were being used by foreign elements to create political strife that could turn into ethnic clashes.

"As we know in Indonesia, the political problems there have been exacerbated by foreign

## Court rules Pinochet's arrest lawful

LONDON, Mar 25: Former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet's fate rested with a senior British minister today after Britain's top court delivered a ruling on a Spanish extradition request that posed a dilemma for the government, reports Reuters.

The court ruled on Wednesday that Pinochet's arrest in London was lawful but drastically cut the number of human rights abuses that could be considered in an extradition hearing.

The 6-1 decision by Britain's most senior judges — the law lords — gave both supporters and opponents reason to cheer in the latest development in a bitter five-month-old legal battle over Pinochet's iron-fisted 1973-1990 rule.

In Chile, television reports showed police using a water cannon to break up a small student protest against Pinochet.

Several hundred rock-throwing youths marched through the city centre, burning rubbish and shouting slogans at police in riot gear. Police gave

no figure on arrests.

Chilean President Eduardo Frei listened to the ruling together with his inner political Cabinet members, sources at the Presidential Palace La Moneda said.

Frei took seven hours to analyse the ruling before making a televised address in which he reiterated the government's stance in favour of Pinochet's release. "This ruling recognises Chile's judicial sovereignty," Frei said.

The ruling posed what British newspapers described as a tough decision for Britain's Home Secretary (Interior Minister) Jack Straw as he considered the next step in urgent talks with government lawyers.

The law lords put the legal hot potato back in the home secretary's lap," said The Guardian.

The law lords said Pinochet could not evade prosecution simply because he had been a head of state but also ruled he was "only answerable for charges of murder and torture after 1988."

## Prodi to replace Santer as EU president

BERLIN, Mar 25: European Union leaders yesterday agreed that Romano Prodi should be the next president of the European Commission, diplomats from several delegations said, reports AFP.

The former Italian Prime Minister will take over from the current president Jacques Santer.

Santer and the 19 other commissioners resigned last week after the publication of damning criticism of their handling of fraud and corruption in Brussels.

Santer said he wants to leave his post by the end of April.

Yesterday's decision means there will be enough time for Prodi to be approved by the European Parliament before it breaks up in May for June elections.

## Hearing of Anwar's appeal against judge tomorrow

KUALA LUMPUR, Mar 25: An appeal by ousted Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim to disqualify the high court judge who conducted his trial will be heard on Saturday, a defence lawyer said today, reports AP.

It was not known whether Judge Alia Sultan, 70, could hear the appeal against himself or the case would be assigned to another judge, said Sankara Nair, one of the two lawyers defending Anwar in the sensational sex-for-favours trial.

Anwar's two-month trial came to a 40-day halt on Tuesday after his lawyers boycotted closing arguments because Paul refused to hear the motion to disqualify him first.

## 50,000 pigs killed in Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR, Mar 25: Malaysian soldiers and police have killed more than 50,000 pigs in an operation meant to control a human illness in Southeast Asia's largest swine-breeding district, the national news agency reported today.

The law lords put the legal hot potato back in the home secretary's lap," said The Guardian.

The law lords said Pinochet could not evade prosecution simply because he had been a head of state but also ruled he was "only answerable for charges of murder and torture after 1988."

The 320,000 pigs in the area are suspected of carrying Japanese encephalitis.

## 885 killed in Punjab last yr Pak Senate slams rise of violence against women

ISLAMABAD, Mar 25: A Senate committee today bemoaned an increase in violent attacks against women, often by their husbands or his parents.

Pakistan's Upper House of parliament or Senate Committee on Human Rights urged the government to "provide a sense of security" for women in Pakistan. It urged greater emphasis on education for girls in a country with a literacy rate of barely 15 per cent among women.

The Senate committee investigation and recommendation followed a damning report last month by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.

That report showed that 82 per cent of women surveyed feared violence "resulting from their husband's displeasure over minor matters" and 52 per cent said they had been beaten by their husbands.

"Domestic violence sometimes took the extreme form of murder or attempted murder," the report said. "The method commonly adopted was burning since it provided an alibi. It was invariably put to an accident while the victim was cooking."

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