# INTERNÂTIONAL

## UN keeps up inspections, US moves to woo war support

#### Experts pay surprise visit to Iraqi army base

UN arms experts visited the "Mother of Battles" complex south of Baghdad Saturday on the third day of renewed inspections as US envoys prepared a marathon tour to woo support for Washington's hardline stance amid persistent anti-war protests

The successful relaunch of UN inspections after a near four-year break failed to dampen war jitters on world markets with benchmark Brent crude up 16 cents over the week despite press reports questioning the war readiness

Weapons experts headed to al-Yusifiya, 15 kilometres (nine miles) from the capital, to inspect the "Mother of Battles" complex, the name given by Baghdad to the 1991 Gulf War

An AFP correspondent at the scene said the facility appeared to be part of Iraa's military industries

All of the experts' visits since the relaunch of inspections Wednesday have been in the Baghdad area, although the inspectors expect to broaden their range in the coming days with the delivery of a first helicopter.

The choppers will be used to transport arms experts to remote areas and provide surveillance of suspect sites to ensure there is no movement in or out during inspections. UN spokesman Hiro Ueki said Friday Baghdad's state-run media meanwhile trumpeted the persistence of anti-

war protests around the world as Washington continued to press for Iraq to be punished mercilessly for any breach of the November 8 UN Security Council resolution that paved the way for the renewed inspections

"The righteous continue to support Iraq against US threats," headlined

The world is still shouting its refusal of US threats to attack Iraq," thundered another official newspaper, Al-Qadissiya.

As the titles went to press, thousands of demonstrators rallied in the Australian cities of Sydney, Adelaide and Canberra Saturday to protest their government's strong support for US and British war threats

Similar protests were due to be held in Melbourne, Brisbane, Darwin and Perth on Sunday.

To counter the reluctance of many European countries to countenance preparations for war amid Iraq's apparent cooperation with the UN inspectors, Washington prepared to send two envoys across the Atlantic on a marathon tour of as many as 10 countries, including key Iraq neighbour

AP adds from Balad: UN weapons inspectors paid a surprise visit Saturday to a small, sleepy military post north of Baghdad where they searched for signs of weapons of mass destruction.

The weapons experts as usual kept their distance from pursuing journalists, who watched from beyond a fence, but it appeared the inspectors had been tipped that the Balad anti-aircraft unit might be harbouring some forbidden biological or more likely chemical arms.

As a morning rain fell on the roofs of open ammunition sheds, the UN monitors checked ordnance crates that presumably held large shells bombs, or rockets. The sound of a hammer on a chisel could be heard as crates were opened

The small military base, about 50 miles from Baghdad, had no obvious



Thousands of anti-war demonstrators march through the streets of Sydney on Saturday to protest against probable participation of Australia in a US-led military attack on Iraq. The rally was part of an Australia-wide campaign of protest organised by an alliance of left-wing activists, students and trade unions to try to shift public support for sending Australian troops to Iraq.

Australian pop star Kylie Minogue poses with her Top Tour award, during BBC's Top Of The Pops Awards at the Manchester Evening News Arena in Manchester on Friday.

#### Mystery disease kills 50 children in Uttar Pradesh

AFP. Lucknow

At least 50 children in north India have died of a mysterious fever in the past month, an official said Saturday. Media reports said the death toll

The health official in the state of Uttar Pradesh could not identify the

According to local doctors, the disease is a mutated form of Japanese encephalitis, a deadly virus which is spread by mosquitoes.

The symptoms include high fever, tiredness, headache, nausea, and

#### 37 killed in bus accident in Kashmir

AFP, Srinagar

At least 37 people were killed Saturday when an overcrowded minibus plunged into a ravine in Indian Kashmir, police said.

The bus, which was so full there were passengers sitting on the roof, was on its way from Doda town in southern Kashmir to the small town of "The minibus meant for 35 people

at the most was carrying more than 60 people when the accident took place," a police spokesman said. He said the minibus turned over

as the driver lost control while negotiating a sharp curve near the village of Khalivaneh.

It fell into a 100-feet (30-metre) deep ditch killing 37 people. Around 25 people were injured and many

#### Last living Beatles lead Harrison tribute concert

AFP, London

Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr, the last living Beatles, regrouped late Friday to head an all-star London concert in tribute to former band member George Harrison, a year to the day since he died.

The spectacular event organised by Harrison's widow Olivia brought a host of music stars and close friends of the ex-Beatle to the Royal Albert

Hall in the centre of the capital. Guitar legend Eric Clapton opened the proceedings, stepping on to the stage under a huge portrait photo of Harrison and bringing a massive cheer from the 5,000strong audience, including the Beatles' original producer George

#### MMA-PML-Q to share power in Baluchistan

Islamists in one of Pakistan's key western border provinces announced a surprise agreement Saturday to form a governing coalition with the army-backed Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q), which it opposed at the federal level.

The Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) alliance of six Islamic parties decided to govern in southwest Baluchistan province with the PML-Q, which rules the fragile federal coalition government, in exchange for the release from jail of two of its members convicted of graft.

Both former provincial ministers, they were jailed in 2000, one on a forgery conviction and the other for misuse of power.

The PML-Q and MMA are the largest seat-holders in the 65-seat Baluchistan legislature with 21 and

18 seats respectively.

On Wednesday the MMA announced they had the support of minor parties opposed to President Pervez Musharraf and would be able to form government.

"All the parties have agreed to give us the right to lead the coalition government," MMA parliamentary leader Maulvi Abdul Wasay told reporters then.

Now, however, the PML-Q will hold the post of chief minister while MMA will hold the Speakership under a deal announced early Saturday following a visit to the provincial capital Quetta by Prime Minister Zafarullah Jamali, a PML-Q leader from Baluchistan.

"We made this agreement in the interests of the people of Baluchistan and we have agreed to accept their (PML-Q) chief minister," MMA provincial leader Maulana Mohammad Khan Sheerani told

#### Fresh wave of violence in Kashmir: 15 killed

AFP, Srinagar

In a fresh flurry of violence in Indian Kashmir Saturday, security forces shot dead ten Islamic rebels, while militants triggered four explosions injuring 17 people.

Five other people were killed in separate incidents, officials said. Four rebels were shot dead by Indian border guards as they tried

to sneak into Indian Kashmir from

the Pakistan-administered zone, a

defence spokesman said. Security forces spotted and challenged the militants as they tried to enter the southern Poonch district, 225 kilometres (140 miles) west of

the state's winter capital Jammu.

"The infiltrators opened fire to which the security forces retaliated, killing all four of them on the spot," he said.

### New Pak PM says 'no' to World AIDS Day targets any bargain on Kashmir stigma, discrimination

PTI, Islamabad

Ruling out any "bargain" on the Kashmir issue, Pakistan's new Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali has said his government would continue the political, diplomatic and moral support to Kashmiris "fighting for right to self determination.

Jamali reportedly reiterated his government's stand during a meeting with Prime Minister of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) Sikanndar Hayat Khan Islamabad.

Stating that people of Pakistan fully supported the Kashmiris in their "heroic struggle", Jamali said that Pakistanis could not even think of compromising on the Kashmir issue, local daily Dawn reported on Saturday

His assertions to Hayat Khan followed assurances by President

Pervez Musharraf to the President of the PoK, Retd Maj. Gen. Anwar Khan early this week that the new government headed by Jamali would not in anyway alter Pakistan's policy on Kashmir.

In his meeting with Hayat Khan, Jamali also claimed that Kashmir is the jugular vein of Pakistan.

While extending their support for Kashmiris, a number of influential politicians and military officials openly assert that the Kashmir was the "jugular vein" of the country as almost all the rivers that meets the water needs of the country flow from Kashmir valley.

Jamali has said that he would visit PoK in the third week of December during which he would address the PoK legislative assembly and the joint sitting of the PoK council consisting top of Pakistan civil and military officials.

Doctors and activists muster on Sunday for World AIDS Day, launching a campaign for easing the burden of stigma suffered by many of the 42 million people with AIDS and HIV.

"Live and Let Live," the slogan for the year-long UN-backed campaign, will lobby for understanding and tolerance for people with HIV/AIDS, who often face crippling discrimination in the workplace, from friends and even their close family.

"The fear of stigma leads to silence, and when it comes to fighting AIDS, silence is death. It suppresses public discussion about AIDS, and deters people from finding out whether they are infected," UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said in an address to mark World AIDS Day,

The latest raft of figures, released

earlier this week by UN's specialist agency UNAIDS and the World Health Organisation (WHO), makes for arim reading. Five million people this year will

have become infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and some 3.1 million will have died from AIDS. After rampaging through sub-

Saharan Africa, the infection is spreading like wildfire in the former Soviet Bloc, driven mainly by intravenous drug use. Without urgent government

intervention, it could become uncontrollable a few years from now in China and India, where prostitution is For the first time in the two-

decade-old history of the epidemic, women account for half of infected people, compared with 48 percent



Activists and supporters of the National Human Rights Council shout anti-Pakistan slogans during a demonstration near the parliament in New Delhi on Saturday. The demonstrators protested against alleged cross border terrorism

## Kenya sees no al-Qaida link

#### 6 Pakistanis among 12 detained for attacks

found no link between 12 people held over Thursday's attacks on Israelis in Mombasa and the al-Qaida network that US officials have said could have had a hand in

The officials said on Friday the top suspect for the blast at the Israeli-owned Paradise Hotel in which 16 people were killed was the Somali-based group Al-Itihad al-Islamiya, known also as AIAI or the Islamic Union.

They said it was a prominent radical Islamist group in the Horn of Africa and had links with Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda, target of President Bush's war on terror after the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington last year.

But Kenyan Internal Security Minister Julius Sunkuli, asked if police had found any connection between al-Qaida and those being held over the explosion and a failed simultaneous attempt to shoot that of the 12 detainees, all foreign-"appear to have the least connection" to the attacks and were likely to "At the point at which investiga-

tions are now, I do not actually think that they were involved," he said of the two. "When the connection is totally ruled out the police will just release them.' The American and Spaniard

were held after trying to check out of another hotel in the area about two hours after the blast. The other detainees are six

Pakistanis and four Somalis. They were arrested for entering Kenya illegally and only later came under suspicion by investigators probing the attacks, police said. Friday's US comments were the

first from Washington to point a finger at al-Qaida and the Somali group since suicide bombers rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into a seaside hotel and missiles nearly hit an Israeli airliner carrying 261 people. But US officials stressed it was

Sunkuli told a news conference too early to be sure about who was "The pattern could fit al Qaeda."

> said one official. Security analysts said the apparently coordinated attacks just minutes apart hore the hallmarks of bin Laden's network. Al-Qaida is widely accused of

> the 1998 bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in which 224 people died, most of them The previously unheard of "Army of Palestine" claimed responsibility

> for Thursday's attacks in a faxed statement via a Lebanese media organization. There was no confir-Near the Kenyan coastal city of Mombasa, Israeli and US experts scoured the debris of the hotel and

the wreckage of the suicide bombers' four-wheel drive Pajero. British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said on Friday no intelligence was available to the West that could have prevented the attacks, suggesting that an Australian warning two weeks ago of a possible terror-

ism risk in Kenya was not specific enough Sunkuli, asked whether he had

received a warning from Australia. said: "I am saying I'm not the only information, but I am saying, I don' have that information.

Britain and the United States warned their citizens on Friday of possible heightened risks in Kenya, particularly in public places frequented by foreigners.

Three suicide bombers smashed the Pajero into the lobby of the Paradise Hotel and blew it up, killing 12 people -- three of them Israelis -- and wounding scores Minutes earlier missiles were fired at the Israeli plane taking off nearby and packed with Israeli tourists.

Other victims included Kenyan dancers who had been welcoming tourists in the hotel lobby when the bomb went off.

Mombasa is a mostly Muslim city with links to the Arab world.

The Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM), an umbrella organisation of Kenvan Muslims condemned the attacks and said those behind them were enemies of Islam and Muslims in Kenva.

### Lankan peace talks move to Europe

Warring parties in Sri Lanka will have their first round of peace talks in a western capital Monday when they hold crucial negotiations to end decades of ethnic bloodshed, diplomats said.

the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have had two rounds of talks in Thailand since September. The four-day session starting here Monday will be their first in Europe. Norwegian peace broker Erik Solheim said aspects of a political

The Sri Lankan government and

review of Oslo-brokered truce in place since February. "There will be a long discussion on the (final) political settlement of the conflict." Solheim said, adding that law and order and "high security zones" in the island's embattled north-east will

settlement to the ethnic conflict will be

taken up at the talks in addition to a

also figure. Diplomats said the latest round was shifted to Norway as Thailand could not stage the December meeting because it coincided with celebra-

tions of the Thai king's birthday. However, with the hurried shift of talks to Oslo, other countries had

expressed interest in hosting future rounds as a sign of support to the Norwegian-backed process, Sri Lankan diplomats said. They said the fourth and fifth

rounds would be held in Thailand, but the sixth in March was almost certain to be staged in Japan which is financially supporting the peace drive. The Tigers announced at the first round in September that they were abandoning their demand for a sepa-

rate state and were willing to accept a

form of regional autonomy or selfgovernance. The Sri Lankan government and the rebels are fielding the same teams for the Oslo talks as at their last round that ended in Thailand's river-side resort of Nakhon Pathom on

November 3. However, Sri Lanka may send its defence secretary Austin Fernando as an advisor, diplomats said.

The two sides will address problems in implementing the truce that took effect on February 23.

Solheim said only 20 people had met with violent deaths in Sri Lanka's embattled north-east this year, whereas at least 2,000 people had been killed in the corresponding period

### Israeli polls may delay peace plan

Israelis asked to stay vigilant abroad

AP, AFP, Jerusalem

A US-backed plan for ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict won't be ready by its December 20 target date and may be delayed until after the Israeli elections a month later, a Palestinian official said Friday.

Separately, another influential

Palestinian joined Friday in

criticising the Palestinian uprising

that has left 1,954 Palestinians and 683 Israelis dead in 26 months of The delayed release of the socalled "road map" to ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, most likely until after the Jan. 28 elections, would mean a further delay in reaching a truce in the uprising, which has come under increasing

The United States, European Union, Russia and the United Nations have jointly been trying to finalise a plan for a negotiated

The plan, which was to be pre-

sented on Dec. 20, calls for a three-

criticism by Palestinian officials and

phase, three-year program that would result in a Palestinian state living in peace beside Israel

But Palestinian Planning Minister Nabil Shaath, after a meeting with US officials in Washington, said the Americans told him release of the plan would likely be delayed.

be an Israeli government ready to work with this plan," Shaath told The Associated Press AFP adds: Israel on Saturday warned its citizens abroad to be extra vigilant following twin terror attacks in Kenya, while closer to home a Palestinian boy was killed

The caution, issued by the foreign ministry, came two days after a suicide car bombing at a resort hotel in the eastern African country killed 13 people, including three Israelis, and a missile attack which nearly brought down a tourist-packed Israeli charter plane.



Bollywood actors Amir Khan (L), Karishma Kapoor (2nd from L), former miss India Diya Mirza (2nd from R) and actor Vivek Oberoi (R) hold posters of the movie 'Dum' in Mumbai on Friday on the occasion of the movie's soundtrack release. Mirza and Oberoi play the lead role in the movie.