

**CONGO / WEEK OF BLOODSHED**

## Rebels consolidate grip on troubled town

**KIGALI (RWANDA), MAY 13.** Congolese rebels consolidated their grip on a troubled north-eastern Congolese town on Tuesday, patrolling the streets and shooting in the air to discourage looting, a rebel leader said on Tuesday.

As calm returned after nearly a week of bloodshed, residents identified at least 112 civilians killed in fighting, said Christian Lukusha, representative of Justice Plus, a local human rights group. The rebels seized control of Bunia from rival tribal fighters on Monday.

The Greek Government evacuated 12 nationals from Bunia to neighbouring Uganda on Monday, said Honore Musoko, another official of Justice Plus.

A Congolese Cabinet Minister, trapped in Bunia since the town fell into rebel hands, took refuge at U.N. premises.

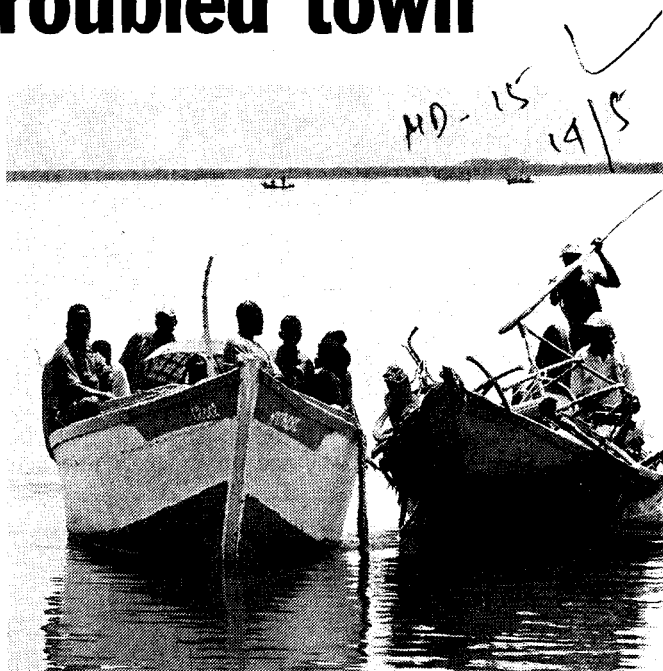
The Congolese Human Rights Minister, Ntumba Luaba, said he was on a peace mission to Bunia.

The Union of Congolese Patriots, or UPC, led by members of the Hema community, captured Bunia from tribal rivals, the Lendus on Monday.

The Hema and Lendu fighters have battled for control of Bunia for one week.

The Fighting begun a day after neighbouring Uganda completed the withdrawal of its more than 6,000 soldiers from in an around Bunia.

Ugandans left the town in the



**Congolese refugees fleeing fighting in Bunia arrive in Ntoroko in Uganda on Saturday after crossing Lake Albert separating the two countries. — AP**

hands of Lendu tribal fighters, a small contingent of U.N. troops from Uruguay and an even smaller Congolese police force.

"Fighting has ended and my troops are conducting mop up operations ... patrolling the streets and sometimes shooting in the air to stop looting," Thomas Lubanga, head of UPC, said. Aid workers, who left after offices, homes and warehouses were looted, trickled back on Tuesday to help residents who spent several days sheltering at three U.N. premises without ac-

cess to clean water and sanitary facilities, said the U.N. mission in Congo, or MONUC.

The police and the U.N. troops have been ineffective in stemming the violence and looting, and a civil administration set up to run Bunia after the Ugandan withdrawal had collapsed.

There are 625 U.N. troops in Bunia, while there are between 25,000 and 28,000 tribal fighters in the region, with thousands of them deployed in and around Bunia. — AP

THE HINDU

14 MAY 2003

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## A BACKLASH IN THE DESERT

Arab bomb

THE CAR-BOMB ATTACKS on expatriate housing complexes in Riyadh, the Saudi capital, carry all the hallmarks of Al-Qaeda's planning and coordination, and will send shock waves around the world. These reflect the first response to the month-long American occupation of Iraq and represent an ominous reminder both to the U.S. and the Saudi monarchy that their nemesis is far from beaten and vanquished. The strike comes within less than a week of the discovery of a major arms cache in the Saudi capital and an uncharacteristically open admission of the terror threat by local officials. An American target in the desert kingdom has for years been the goal of the Saudi mastermind, Osama bin Laden, and his terrorist group, and American and Saudi officials had been warning of a plot that could cause "tremendous damage". The U.S., which announced its decision to withdraw all its combat forces from Saudi soil by the end of August even as its campaign in Iraq was winding down, had issued a specific warning early this month that militants "may be in the final phases of planning attacks" on American interests in the kingdom. That neither the warnings nor the high alert of the security apparatus could prevent the massive bomb attacks in the capital speaks of the degree of local support that Osama and his network have built up in Saudi Arabia. This must come as a shock especially to the rest of the world, which had been lulled into complacency by the easy manner in which the Saddam Hussein regime disappeared into the sands of Iraq.

Aftershocks as a consequence of the American invasion of Iraq were not unanticipated and Washington had begun to plan repositioning of its forces for a post-Saddam Hussein Middle East. It was taken for granted that the first casualty of such reshuffling would be the unnatural relationship between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, built up solely as an oil-for-security programme. In order not to give credence to talk that they

may be ready to leave Saudi Arabia and ask it to fend for itself now that they are in occupation of an equally oil-rich Iraq, American officials have claimed that their military withdrawal will help ease political pressure on the Saudi royal family. It may on the contrary allow the emergence of contradictory forces in the kingdom, so far suppressed and forced to work underground. Created by the British after World War I, the Saudi kingdom is a strange mixture of the modern and the medieval. The monarchy has resisted suggestions to introduce democratic reforms and has been practising and exporting its own orthodox version of Islam. The two stances have produced a totally divergent political opposition. On the one side is a section, Western educated and exposed to modernity, which seeks a gradual movement to democracy. On the other is a section that feels the monarchy is not orthodox enough in a land that holds Islam's two holy places. A powerful adherent to the second movement is Osama, the millionaire turned terror exponent.

Riyadh, the most apolitical capital around, is no stranger in recent times to bomb explosions and attacks on the interests of Americans who came into the country in a big way after the first Gulf War more than a decade ago. The planned American withdrawal, announced after the Iraqi action so that Osama and his Al-Qaeda do not claim credit for it, is a challenge that the Saudi regime must meet by reforming society so that bomb explosions do not convert into volcanic eruptions. Fundamentalist forces armed with the terrorist's tool must be ready to reap a harvest by exploiting popular unrest. The most effective answer to counter this trend is to open up society and give the people a vehicle to express their democratic urges. In a society ruled on feudal lines by an absolute monarch, democracy must be rarer than rain. But failure to plant its seeds can have disastrous consequences for the entire region.

THE HINDU

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RIYADH BLASTS / WESTERN RESIDENCES TARGETED

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# A string of car bomb attacks

By Atul Aneja

**MANAMA, MAY 13.** Amid a spate of suicide bombings in which at least 10 U.S. nationals were killed, the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, arrived in Riyadh this morning.

In closely coordinated incidents, a string of massive car bomb attacks last night rocked Riyadh's three plush residential compounds, resided mainly by westerners and foreigners of other nationalities.

A fourth car bomb went off on Tuesday morning outside the headquarters of Siyanco, a joint U.S.-Saudi owned company, without causing much damage. Gen. Powell on arrival from Amman confirmed that at least 10 Americans had been killed. Two Filipinos and an Australian were also believed killed in these incidents, taking the death toll to 13.

A U.S. official reportedly said that overall casualties appeared to be in the hundreds. British, German, French, Australian and other Arab citizens were among the dead and wounded, apart from several personnel of the Saudi National Guard. Casualty figures were expected to mount as identification of bodies disfigured by the blasts was becoming difficult.

Eyewitnesses reported that the bombings had wrecked 16 housing blocks in one

location, while a multi-story building housing single American men has been devastated in another. "Terrorism strikes everywhere and everyone," Gen. Powell said after arrival. "It is a threat to the civilized world." While no one has claimed responsibility for the attacks, Gen. Powell said the bombings "had the earmarks of Al-Qaeda." "I believe Al-Qaeda has been weakened, but it has not been destroyed," he told a news conference earlier Tuesday in Amman.

### Hub of activities

Analysts point out that the bombings and events in the preceding one-month indicate that Saudi Arabia is beginning to succeed Afghanistan as the hub of the Al-Qaeda activities.

On May 7, 19 men, including 17 Saudis had escaped from a shootout when a major Al-Qaeda attack that targeted the Saudi Interior and Defence Ministers was foiled. This incident was fourth in a string of terrorist strikes in Saudi Arabia in the last one month.

In an indication that the Al-Qaeda may have now re-grouped, an E-mail message to a Saudi newspaper quoted the Al-Qaeda spokesman, Thabet ibn Qais, that "an attack against America was inevitable".

Mr. Thabet reportedly said that the Al-

Qaeda had "carried out changes in its leadership and sidelined the September 11, 2001 team." He added, "future missions have been entrusted to a new team which is well protected against the U.S. intelligence services." The old Al-Qaeda leadership, he said, was unaware of these changes.

Diplomatic sources see last night's terror strikes sharpening the polarisation between the extremists and moderates inside Saudi Arabia. With the incident causing significant American casualties and the Al-Qaeda seeking to reassemble in Saudi Arabia, the moderate Saudi leadership may have no option but to mount a sustained campaign against the network, with U.S. help. This is, however, going to result in stiff resistance as anti-U.S. sentiments in Saudi Arabia, especially after the Iraq-war, are high.

Besides, the extremists reportedly have significant pockets of influence within Saudi Arabia's ruling elite that could weaken a counter-terror campaign. But aware of the high costs involved, the Saudi Foreign Minister, Saud al Faisal, who received Gen. Powell, hinted that Riyadh might not hesitate to take tough measures.

Monday's attacks, he said "should increase our efforts and should make us not hesitate to take whatever measures that are needed to oppose these people, who know only hate, only killing."

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THE HINDU

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**WEST ASIA / FOCUS ON EASING TENSIONS**

# Powell to push peace 'road map'

By Atul Aneja

**MANAMA, MAY 10.** The United States Secretary of State, Colin Powell, arrived in Israel this evening to seek Tel Aviv's endorsement of the "road map" that envisages creation of an independent Palestinian State, based on a series of confidence-building steps that the Israelis and Palestinians should implement.

Setting aside some their reservations on the "road map" whose principal author is the United States, the Palestinians have already declared that they accept its basic parameters. The Israelis, however, have in the recent past, raised 14 points that they wished to be addressed before committing themselves on the route that could lead to a permanent end to their differences with the Palestinians.

At the present moment, the Israelis appear to be linking their commitment to the U.S.-authored blueprint for peace to concrete steps by Palestinian leaders that would demonstrate their commitment to rein in suicide bombers and other perpetrators of extremist violence. Gen. Powell, on his part, has already declared that he was not prepared for lengthy negotiations with the Israelis and Palestinians to seek their endorsement of the "road map." On the contrary, hoping to get an early Israeli commitment to the broad parameters of this plan, Gen. Powell, during his visit, is aiming to go a little further.

Analysts point out that the top U.S. diplomat is working on a formulation that would result in the first tension-easing steps between the Israelis and Palestinians, since violence erupted 31 months ago. Fresh indications are emerging that Gen. Powell, during his talks, would like to convince the Israelis to ease the military pressure on Palestinian towns and cities in return for a commitment to a "ceasefire" by Palestinian extremist groups.

After concluding his talks with the Israelis by Sunday afternoon, Gen. Powell is expect-

ed to hold discussions with the newly-elected Palestinian Prime Minister, Mahmoud Abbas. In 10 days time, the Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, will travel to Washington for follow-up talks with the U.S. President, George W. Bush.

Analysts point out that Israel's talks with the U.S. are not simply confined to the creation of an independent Palestinian State in return for a termination of terror strikes against its civilians. On the contrary, Israel is seeking to fulfil a much broader strategic agenda in the region.

Israel, which has in the past signed peace deals with Egypt and Jordan, is seeking greater security along its northern border with Lebanon. Two problems are, however, coming in the way. First, is the presence of the highly trained anti-Israel, Hizbollah group in Lebanon, that Syria and Iran support. Second, Syria, which exercises enormous

influence in Lebanon, has also positioned some of its troops in that country. Not surprisingly, Gen. Powell, who was in Syria and Lebanon last week, and has not minced words in asking Syria to end its support for Hizbollah.

Israel, diplomatic sources say, through its engagement of negotiations with the U.S., has also begun to look far at drawing benefits from the possible normalisation of its economic relations with some of the key Arab nations in West Asia in the future. The U.S., on its part, has already taken the first steps to push for Israel's regional accommodation. Sources pointed out that by calling for a free trade area in West Asia in a decade, Mr. Bush on Friday has signalled that the Israelis and Arabs should agree to occupy a common economic space in the region in the future. U.S.-backed plans are also afoot at reviving an oil pipeline from Mosul in Iraq to the Israeli Mediterranean coast at Haifa.



**A Palestinian child walks amid the rubble of a house razed by Israeli forces in Rafah on Saturday. — AFP**

# U.K. warned of unrest over asylum policy

210-15 By Hasan Suroor 9/15

LONDON, MAY 8. In a report, which is likely to play into the hands of anti-immigrant groups, a high-level cross-party parliamentary committee has warned that the continuing flow of asylum-seekers into Britain could provoke a "political backlash" with people turning to extremist parties as has already happened in the U.K. and several European countries.

The report, published barely a week after the rabidly racist British National Party (BNP) won an unprecedented 16 seats in local elections, also warned of "social unrest" if the current flow of asylum-seekers was not checked. Pointing out that the number of people seeking asylum in Britain had nearly trebled in the past 20 years, the report said: "Clearly this is unacceptable. If allowed to continue unchecked, it could overwhelm the capacity of the receiving countries to cope, leading inevitably to so-

cial unrest. It could also, and there are signs this may already be happening, lead to a growing political backlash which will, in turn, lead to the election of extremist parties with extremist solutions."

Asylum has become a major political issue in Britain and right-wing parties, including the Tories, have used it to whip up an anti-immigrant hysteria which has got worse after '9/11' with intelligence agencies suggesting that terrorists are exploiting Britain's relaxed asylum regime to seek a safe haven here. The Government has responded with a series of tough measures, including forced detention of asylum-seekers till their cases are decided, but the problem remains. The shadow home secretary Oliver Letwin, called the report a "damning indictment" of the Government's handling of the issue and said the entire asylum system was in "in chaos". The report, which was backed by Labour MPs on the committee, criticised the Government for not being

able to give "even a rough estimate" of how many asylum-seekers who continued to stay in Britain after their applications were rejected. Critics alleged that a large number of failed asylum-seekers simply 'melted' into the crowd, and there was no way to track them down. There have been suggestions that identity cards, on the lines of those in European countries, should be introduced to check illegal immigration.

The report coincided with the release of the latest census figures revealing a wide gap between the social and economic status of immigrants and white Britons. Even second and third-generation immigrants, particularly Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, lag far behind the white population in terms of employment, education, health and other social indicators. This belies the widespread impression that the non-whites, born and brought up in Britain, are on a faster track than their parents and grandparents who came here as aliens.

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IRAQ / POWELL HOLDS TALKS WITH KOFI ANNAN

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# Bush Govt. eases sanctions

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By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MAY 8. The Bush administration has suspended some of the long standing sanctions against Iraq even as it prepares to present a resolution at the United Nations, which could come as early as this Friday, calling for an end to the punitive measures against that West Asian country.

"The easing of the U.S. sanctions will bring much needed aid and humanitarian relief to the Iraqi people as they begin the process of rebuilding their lives after more than two decades of brutal dictatorship," remarked the Treasury Secretary, John Snow, while announcing the administration's decision.

The U.S. President, George W. Bush, announced the suspension of sanctions at a press conference with the Prime Minister of Spain, Jose Marie Aznar, one of the key allies in the conflict over Iraq. The Suspension of the Iraq Sanctions Act means, among other things, that Government-funded and private humanitarian assistance can be shipped to Iraq and people in the U.S. can send up to \$500 a



**Iraqi women line up with their sick infants at a hospital in Baghdad on Thursday. Humanitarian aid is slowly reaching Iraqs after more than 10 years of U.N. sanctions. — Reuters**

month to family and friends. But export of certain goods in the realm of national security, will, however, require a special clearance from the Government.

The U.S., along with Britain and Spain, are getting ready to introduce a resolution in the Security Council as early as this Friday; and the administration is on a major lobbying offensive in New York and at world capitals, especially among the 15

members represented in the Council.

"The atmosphere that existed prior to the war has changed and... people now want to work together for the good of the Iraqi people," Mr. Bush said of the efforts at the United Nations. The Secretary of State, Colin Powell, met the U.N. Secretary General, Kofi Annan, in New York on Wednesday and is all set to begin a series of talks in Europe and in West Asia shortly.

Other senior members of the administration are travelling to major capitals in the world with a view to winning over support for the U.S.-led efforts at the U.N.

For instance, the Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, would have raised this issue in Pakistan during his trip. Pakistan is one of the 10 non-permanent members of the Security Council and is the President of the Council for May.

The Bush administration is under no illusions of the kind of "fight" that is in store at the world body even while there is optimism that ultimately the language of the resolution would be satisfying to all, especially the veto-holding members. Already, Germany and France have indicated a desire to be flexible on the issue of sanctions; and only Russia is insisting on some tough stipulations to go along with the move. This would have to do with certification on weapons of mass destruction; control of Iraqi oil revenues; and modalities of future contracts with Baghdad in the realm of oil field development.

09 MAY 2003

# U.S. pull-out: Riyadh may see reforms

By Atul Aneja

**MANAMA, MAY 4.** In withdrawing its forces from Saudi Arabia after accomplishing "regime change" in Iraq, the United States has set in motion a parallel process that could further redefine the West Asian political order.

The pullout of the U.S. forces from Saudi Arabia, Washington's key ally for over 60 years, has two major implications. First, it strengthens the hand of the "reformists" within the monarchy in Riyadh vis-à-vis extremist groups who also have an influence within the House of Saud.

Analysts say the U.S. action will help the Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, who has made his realisation for political change in Saudi Arabia public, to take on the Wahabis — believers in a Saudi State based on the foundations of radical Islam.

People like Osama bin Laden have been the practitioners of Wahabi extremist ideology on,

an international scale. In over-seeing the back of U.S. troops, the Saudi Crown Prince has stolen the thunder of practitioners of radical Islam who have been clamouring for the exit of foreign troops from Saudi Arabian soil.

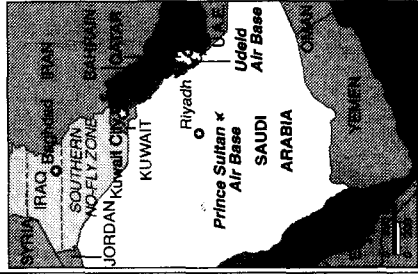
By negotiating the pull-out, the Crown Prince is likely to gain huge support among the Saudi people who, by and large, have been opposed to the U.S. military presence on their territory.

## A tight rope-walk

Aware of the unpopularity of the U.S. troops' presence, but keen to retain its linkages with the U.S., the Saudi regime walked the tight rope during the Iraq war. It disallowed combat missions by the U.S. fighter jets from its soil, but allowed the U.S. command centre at the sprawling Prince Sultan air base to function. It also did its best to curb information about the use of locations along the Saudi Arabia-Iraq border from where the U.S. forces launched some

## Change of air command

In the first major reorganisation of military forces in the Persian Gulf region, the United States moved its Air Operation Center from Saudi Arabia's Prince Sultan Air Base — home to 4,500 Air Force personnel and 100 U.S. planes — to Udeid Air Base in Qatar.



SOURCES: GlobalSecurity.org; Associated Press

forces from Saudi Arabia, but by positioning them in neighbouring countries such as Iraq and Qatar, the U.S. has also signalled to the reformists in Saudi Arabia that political changes inspired from the top must be carried out urgently. Otherwise, U.S. commentators have hinted that Washington might be considering alternative plans to bring about a fundamental transformation in the Saudi Kingdom.

One such option, which has been talked about recently, has been the revival of the Woolsey plan, authored by the former CIA Director, James Woolsey. According to this plan, Saudi Arabian Kingdom could be trifurcated.

The oil rich area of Ihsa in the east could be separated from Hejaz and Najd, which would also emerge as separate nations.

If political reforms in Saudi Arabia succeed, they could not only weaken the influence of the extremists, but also have a larger impact on the region.

of its special operations inside Iraq. Second, by pulling out

10-19-915

# U.S., Syria discuss 'road map'

By Atul Aneja

**MANAMA, MAY 3** After witnessing a steep decline in their relationship, Syria and the U.S. today began fresh talks to narrow down their differences and exchange views on the developments in the region following the recent war in Iraq.

The visiting U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, touched upon two broad themes during his talks with the Syrian President Bashar al Assad. First, the two sides talked about the road map visualised mainly by the U.S. in association with the European Union, Russia and the United Nations to end the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Gen. Powell, prior to his talks, gave enough indications that the U.S. was willing to accommodate Syria's conditional presence in the inner circle of negotiations on the Israeli-Palestinian question by pointing out that Washington was seeking a 'comprehensive' settlement of this crisis.

The top U.S. diplomat said that he would convey to Mr. Assad that the talks the Bush administration hoped to initiate between Israel and the Palestinians could result into wider negotiations involving Syria. The Syrian side has already made it clear that it is also looking for a 'comprehensive' settlement of the Israel-Palestinian issue. Concretely, it means that it would not be satisfied by signing a separate deal with Israel on the return of the Golan

Heights occupied by Israel since 1967. The resolution of the Israeli-Syrian dispute over Golan Heights, according to the Syrian viewpoint, had to be accommodated in a larger package of settlement that addressed the basic question of Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands.

The U.S. Secretary of State reportedly sought an end to Syrian support for the Hezbollah group.

Based in Lebanon along Israel's northern borders, the Hezbollah played a key role in the end of the nearly two decades long Israeli occupation in southern Lebanon. Diplomatic sources say that Syria has trained the Hezbollah, while Iran armed this group.

The official Syrian view, however, is that the Hezbollah is a legitimate political group in Lebanon and the U.S. should raise its concerns about this group's activities with the Lebanese government.

The U.S. is also seeking the pull back of Syrian troops from Lebanon. Analysts point out that Syria is unlikely to accommodate U.S. concerns on its activism in Lebanon, unless Israel, on its part, also demonstrates flexibility.

The Israeli occupation of the Shebaa farms on the strategic tri-junction of Israel, Lebanon and Syria continues to be sources of friction among these three countries.

The U.S. also wants Syria to terminate support for the anti-



The Syrian President, Bashar al-Assad (left), and the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, in Damascus on Saturday. — AFP

Israel Hamas and the Islamic Jihad extremist groups in the Palestinian territories. Syria denies supporting these groups, while acknowledging that some of these organisations do run their media offices from its soil.

Second, the two sides discussed the developments in Iraq following the exit of the Saddam Hussein regime. Syrian officials are of the view that Washington is looking for Syrian support to stabilise the internal situation in Iraq.

## Influence

According to the Syrian perception, the U.S. realises that Damascus exercises considerable influence among a wide cross-section of Iraqi society, bas next week.

and which could be leveraged to restore calm in Iraq. But Syria, on its part, also has some concerns, which it would like Washington to address.

For instance, it strongly opposes the prospects of diplomatic links being established between post-war Iraq and Israel. It also does not want to see a post war dispensation emerging in Baghdad that is hand-picked by Washington.

After concluding his talks in Damascus, Gen. Powell headed for Lebanon later in the evening. He is expected to meet the Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, and the newly elected Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas next week.

THE HINDU

MAY 2003



# Many children trapped in dormitory

**CELIKISUYU (TURKEY), MAY 1.** A strong earthquake shook south-eastern Turkey on Thursday, killing at least 84 people and injuring 390 others. Rescuers dug frantically in the rubble of a school dormitory, hunting for more than 100 children believed trapped.

Several dozen children had already been saved from the debris of the boys' school. Hundreds of terrified parents prayed and screamed, waiting for news of their children.

The Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, said at least 84 people were killed, while the Housing Minister, Zeki Ergezen, said the toll could be 150 throughout the region.

## School collapses

Crews were working to rescue more than 100 primary and middle school students still buried under the four-story dormitory that collapsed in the village of Celtiksuyu. By midday Thursday, 72 children were rescued, said a rescue worker. He said the voices of children screaming could be heard from the debris.

"We hope another 50 students will be saved," he said, adding that many were feared dead. The headmaster said 198 students — aged 7 to 16 — were sleeping in the dormitory when the quake hit.

Five students and one teacher were found dead, said the Bingol Mayor, Feyzullah Karaaslan. "My friends are waiting for help in there. They were calling for help as they were pulling me out," 12-year-old Veysel Dagdelen was quoted as saying by the Anatolia news agency after he was rescued from the debris.

The magnitude-6.4 earthquake struck around 3:27 a.m. (0027 GMT) on Thursday and was centred just outside the city of Bingol, 700 km east of Ankara, the Kandilli seismology center in Istanbul said.

## Bridge destroyed

At least 25 buildings and a bridge collapsed in the centre of Bingol, a city of 250,000 inhabitants, the Mayor said.



Rescuers extricating a trapped victim from the rubbles of a boarding school which collapsed in the earthquake that rocked Turkey's eastern province of Bingol on Thursday. — AFP

Damage could be seen throughout the city, where the streets were filled with terrified residents. Bingol is a largely rural poor area in the predominantly Kurdish southeast that suffered for years from the fierce fighting between the Turkish army and Kurdish autonomy-seeking rebels. The earthquake damaged power and telephone lines in the area. More than 100 aftershocks hit the region, and rescue workers were unable to reach many villages.

At the remnants of the school dorm, soldiers, rescuers and locals worked their way through the debris with cranes and jackhammers to try to save surviving students. Many students were being treated for their injuries on mattresses laid out near the flattened building.

Naim Gencgul, a 15-year-old boy, was pulled out of the rubble with a broken arm. "The whole building was on top of me. We all started screaming," he said.

Relatives rushed toward soldiers every time a rescued

boy was carried out on a stretcher to check if their children had been saved. Most of the children are sons of poor farmers from nearby villages that do not have schools and are difficult of access. Parents questioned the quality of the school's construction. "The stable I built did not collapse, but the school did," said Abdullah Gunala, the father of a rescued student.

Mr. Erdogan visited the quake area, and said proper inspections had not been carried out and that shoddy material had been used to build the school. "Investigations will be launched and the guilty will be prosecuted," he said.

Thousands of poorly built buildings collapsed when two massive earthquakes struck western Turkey in 1999, killing some 18,000 people. Nazim Karabulut, a resident of Bingol, described the school as a "terrible construction. Nobody ever learned their lessons."

Doctors at Bingol's state

hospital appealed for help to deal with the crisis. The hospital was seriously damaged in the quake and scores of injured were being treated outside. "We need every kind of help," said Ilhan Cokabay, chief doctor at the hospital. "Medical supplies, people, whatever."

The Mayor said the city also needed more large tents.

The Red Crescent sent 3,100 tents, 13,000 blankets, as well as mobile kitchens, generators, ambulances, and four tons of food supplies, Anatolia reported. Soldiers, emergency workers and mountaineers with rescue experience were also headed to the area. The temblor was felt in the nearby provinces of Erzincan, Tunceli, Bingol, Erzurum, Kayseri and Sivas.

The quake lasted 17 seconds, said Gulay Barbarasoglu of the Istanbul observatory. Earthquakes are frequent in Turkey, which lies on the North Anatolian fault. A 1971 quake in Bingol killed 900 people. — AP

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## Intention not to control Iraq: Rumsfeld

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**BAGHDAD, MAY 1.** The U.S. Secretary of Defence, Donald H. Rumsfeld, operating out of a palace that once belonged to the ousted President, Saddam Hussein, assured Iraqis that the U.S. was eager to return the country to their control.

"Iraq belongs to you," Mr. Rumsfeld, the highest-ranking U.S. administration official to visit the Iraqi capital, said in a message broadcast over radio and television in the Baghdad area on Wednesday. "The coalition has no intention of owning or running Iraq."

On Thursday, Mr. Rumsfeld met briefly in Kuwait City the Kuwaiti Emir, Sheik Jaber Al Ahmed Al Sabah, telling him he had a good visit to Baghdad.

"The single most vivid impression is that the regime of Mr. Hussein did very poorly for the people of Iraq," Mr. Rumsfeld said. "It put the money into the wrong thing. The country is run down."

Mr. Rumsfeld's visit to Iraq came amid further bloodshed in the city of Fallujah, west of Baghdad, where U.S. soldiers fired on anti-American protesters for the second time this week. The Mayor said two people were killed and 18 wounded in the Sunni Muslim city and Ba'ath Party stronghold 50 km west of Baghdad. Marchers were protesting a Monday night shooting that hospital officials said killed 13 Iraqis.

Mr. Rumsfeld told American troops that the administration of the President, George W. Bush, was actively encouraging countries to turn over Iraqi fugitives. "My impression is some (countries) that were accepting them are no longer, which is a good start," Mr. Rumsfeld told a rally at Baghdad airport, formerly called Saddam International. The Defence Secretary had previously accused Syria of allowing former members of the regime to cross its borders. He also called on Iraqis to tell coalition soldiers about former Iraqi officials and foreign fighters who might still be in their neighbourhoods. Mr. Rumsfeld praised U.S. troops and said they had "unleashed events that will unquestionably shape the course of this country." — AP



**The U.S. Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, signs a Baghdad road sign at the request of a soldier in Baghdad on Thursday. — Reuters**

W Asia (12)

W. ASIA PEACE PROCESS / U.S. UNVEILS 'ROAD MAP'

# Bush to invite Abbas for talks

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MAY 1. The White House has said that the new Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, will be invited to Washington for talks with the President, George W. Bush. However, no firm date has been set.

It has been the policy of the Bush administration to keep the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, away from any formal meeting, and at a distance from the evolving diplomacy in West Asia. Mr. Bush went to the extent of accusing Mr. Arafat of having a hand in the violence against Israel. With the swearing-in of new Palestinian leaders, the Bush administration is unveiling its "Road Map" which has been developed with the European Union, the United Nations and Russia. It envisions the establishment of a formal Palestinian State by 2005 and a rollback of all Israeli settlements. The ultimate goal envisions Israel and the state of Palestine living side-by-side in peace.

The schedule for 2005 means that Israel has to transfer the West Bank and Gaza Strip to the Palestinians; but Washington has not committed itself openly at this time on the status of Jerusalem, which by any account, is a highly contentious and emotionally explosive issue. The Secretary of State, Colin Powell, spoke to Mr. Abbas as also to the Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, on Wednesday. Gen. Powell will be meeting the two later this month.

The Bush administration has come under increasing pressure from its allies in Europe and across West Asia for failing to be diplomatically active in the peace process between the Israelis and Palestinians.



The European Union special envoy, Miguel Angel Moratinos (centre), the Palestinian Prime Minister, Mahmoud Abbas (left), and the Palestinian President, Yasser Arafat, in Ramallah on Thursday. — Reuters

Now that the military phase of the Iraq conflict is over, attention is on Washington's ability to keep at the West Asia peace process.

The formal presentation of the Road Map to the Israelis and the Palestinians came a day after the violent incident in a Tel Aviv restaurant, which resulted in the killing of a suicide bomber and three others.

This has raised the question on whether Mr. Abbas could effectively fight violence from within his movement and outside.

The State Department said that the attack would not derail the peace effort.

Gen. Powell is leaving for Spain on Thursday and from there to Albania, Syria and Lebanon.

02 MAY 2003

# Abbas takes office; blast rocks Tel Aviv

**RAMALLAH, APRIL 30.** The reformist Palestinian Prime Minister, Mahmoud Abbas, took office today in a key step toward a U.S.-backed "road map" for West Asia peace, the official Palestinian news agency said.

Palestinian authorities admitted only television crews, without their mobile phones, into the packed swearing-in ceremony at the battered headquarters of the Palestinian President, Yasser Arafat, in Ramallah. But a reporter from the official Palestinian news agency Wafa told Reuters that Mr. Abbas was the first Minister to be sworn in today.

The landmark ceremony had already been marred by a new Palestinian suicide bombing in Tel Aviv early today, in which the bomber killed three people. The attack underlined the formidable challenge Mr. Abbas faces to curb militant violence in a 31-month-old Palestinian uprising.

Mr. Abbas is the first-ever Palestinian Prime Minister, a post Mr. Arafat created under international pressure to cede some powers and implement democratic reforms.

His Cabinet includes both critics of Mr. Arafat and loyalists from within his Fatah movement. **REUTERS**

The United Nations envoy to West Asia, Terje Larsen, told reporters that the "road map" would be presented to Mr. Abbas later on Wednesday evening. Palestinian officials said Israel would also receive the plan the same day, though Israeli officials could not confirm that.

A militia tied to Mr. Abbas' own Fatah movement claimed responsibility for the Tel Aviv bombing, along with the Islamic militant group Hamas. A spokesman for the



**The Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, shakes hands with Mohammad Dahlan, Internal Security Chief, while the Prime Minister, Mahmoud Abbas (left), looks on during the swearing-in of Mr. Abbas' government in Ramallah on Wednesday. — AFP**

Fatah-linked militia, the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, said the attack was a message to Mr. Abbas that "nobody can disarm the resistance movements without a political solution".

Arriving at the West Bank headquarters of Mr. Arafat, ahead of his swearing-in on Wednesday, Mr. Abbas said, "We condemn this attack strongly."

In his inaugural speech to the Palestinian Parliament on Tuesday, Mr. Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen, hinted at a future

crackdown on militias, saying that "the unauthorised possession of weapons ... is a major concern that will be relentlessly addressed."

The bomber, who the Al Aqsa spokesman said came from the West Bank town of Tul-karem, struck on Tel Aviv's seaside promenade in the early hours on Wednesday, blowing himself up outside a pub and restaurant popular with foreigners and just a few metres from the heavily guarded U.S. Embassy. — Reuters/AP

BRUSSELS MEET / MOVE MAY TRIGGER TENSIONS

# 'Old Europe' plans to overhaul defences

By Batuk Gathani

**BRUSSELS, APRIL 30.** The four anti-Iraq war European powers, led by France and Germany, unveiled plans last night to set-up a central European military headquarters in 2004. At a summit meeting here they also agreed to set up an autonomous European defence organisation which may some day either rival or come in conflict with the more than five-decade-old western NATO. It is ironical to note that the four — France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg — are also members of the military alliance.

The project has been immediately dismissed as "divisive and unconstructive" by the American and British officials, though the dissident European leaders said their decision to set-up an independent defence organisation means no harm to the U.S. or NATO. However, according to European analysts today, the leaders are seen risking new tensions with the U.S. and Britain. Emotions on both sides of the Atlantic are running high. The Belgian Prime Minister, Guy Verhofstadt, who hosted the brief and controversial "European summit", said his Government's purpose was to strengthen NATO's "European

pillar". A British official called the summit "extremely unhelpful" and privately described it as a "coalition of the unwilling".

The German Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, said there was "very little Europe" within the NATO decision-making process which is seen dominated by the U.S. Implied criticism at the Bush administration he said: "This is why we want a change." The seven-point strategy of the four NATO dissidents includes the establishment of a "nuclear collective capacity for planning and conducting operation for the European Union", which in effect may mean setting up a separate and independent planning headquarters, which will be set up in a Brussels suburb. The Franco-German brigade would be expanded and this may give a big push to European Union's 60,000-strong rapid reaction forces, which may be in operation by the middle of this year.

The four said they expected some of the E.U.'s soon-to-be 10 new member states to support their initiative and invest more in military equipment, but did not specify any monetary obligations. The heart of the matter is about the definition and parameters of the so-called "one polar world".

In a recent statement, for example, the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, described France's desire for a "multi-polar world" concept as leading to rivalries and instability and suggested that Europe and the U.S. must work as "one polar world". The French President, Jacques Chirac, last night referred to Mr. Blair's remark and said: "For balance to exist there will have to be strong Europe and a strong United States linked together by a strong cultural pact. That means relations between the European Union and United States will have to be relations of complimentary and partnership between equals. Otherwise, it will be a different world which is not what France observes and wants."

In another dramatic development, the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, snubbed Mr. Blair, who was in Moscow to plead the U.S. case for removing U.N. economic sanctions against Iraq. The Europeans have long suspected that such a move would give Americans and British a "free access" to Iraq's oil resources, which are second largest after Saudi Arabia. Mr. Putin insisted that U.N. the sanctions be maintained until an independent government in Iraq was established.

West Asia

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# Tariq Aziz, Iraq's face for the world, turns himself in

NADIM LADKI  
BAGHDAD, APRIL 25

IRAQIS today hailed the surrender of high-profile former deputy premier Tariq Aziz to US forces, saying it proved the Saddam Hussein era was over.

With the best-known face of Saddam's ousted government in their control, US officials guiding the reconstruction of the war-ravaged country predicted that some government ministries could resume work by the end of next week.

But wrangling continued at the UN over control of Iraqi oil revenues that Washington wants to use to pay much of the multi-billion-dollar bill for setting Iraq back on its feet.

Aziz, No. 43 on a US list of 55 most-wanted Saddam aides, gave himself up in Baghdad on Thursday. "He did surrender. He is currently being questioned by coalition forces," a US military spokesman said in Qatar.

Aziz, 67, last appeared in public on March 19, the eve of the war, after rumours that he had been shot or had defected.

CNN quoted his sister as saying he had recently suffered two heart attacks. She said he had been holding discussions with the Americans through an intermediary for several days, seeking assurances that he would be treated "in a dignified manner" and receive medical care.

She told CNN that US Army medics were on hand when he surrendered. The silver-haired, cigar-smoking Aziz, who is fluent in English, played a starring diplomatic role as foreign minis-

ter in the run-up to the 1991 Gulf War. Later he was the defiant international voice of Iraq before the invasion that overthrew Saddam.

Ordinary Iraqis welcomed the report of his surrender. "I heard the good news this morning. This is another proof that Saddam is finished," said street vendor Mohammad Hareth on the quiet, early-morning streets of the capital. "If Aziz surrenders to the Americans, who is still with Saddam? He is on his own with a handful of people, among them his two sons," Hareth added.

Another Baghdad resident, Ali, said Aziz was the most important figure in US hands. "He was very important to Saddam."

In the United States, President George W. Bush responded to questions about Aziz's fate with a smile and a thumbs-up sign. Aziz, who had vowed on the eve of the war to die in a long and bloody battle with the United States, was the 12th of the 55 individuals on the US wanted list to be taken into custody, officials said. Three others are believed dead.

Earlier, the US Administrator in Iraq said the formation of a new Iraqi government would start next week.

Meanwhile, Bush told NBC there was some evidence suggesting Saddam might be dead after being targeted by US air strikes. "The people will wonder if Saddam Hussein is dead or not. There's some evidence that...suggests he might be," Bush said. "We would never make that declaration until we were more certain, but

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



INDIAN EXPRESS

20 APR 2003





# The Statesman

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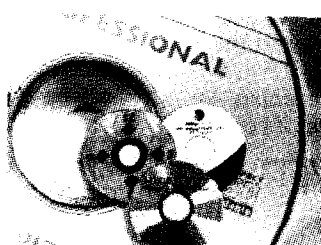
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**NITISH MEN SEEK EXPULSION OF FIVE GEORGE LOYALISTS**

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## Togadia held for defying ban

AJMER, April 13. — Mr Praveen Togadia was arrested tonight shortly after he distributed tridents to Bajrang Dal activists here defying a ban and prohibitory orders. The VHP leader distributed the tridents among 3,000 Dal activists amid chanting of hymns and slogans at Subhash Udyan. Within hours, he was arrested near Kishanganji, 40 km from here, police said. On 8 April, the state government had banned the distribution, possession and carrying of tridents except at religious places. The VHP has called a state bandh tomorrow. — PTI

## Hospital violence

KOLKATA, April 13. — A mob damaged nine vehicles, including two ambulance vans, and furniture at the Assembly of God Church Hospital today. The ransacking followed the death of Mansoor Alam, who was injured in Friday night's encounter that killed the UP businessman Taseer Khan on Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Road. The mob alleged that hospital's negligence caused Mansoor's death. — SNS

## 5-yr-old killed

KOLKATA, April 13. — A five-year-old boy was killed on Eastern Metropolitan Bypass when he was hit by a car while crossing the road on Sunday morning. The accident led to mob violence. At least eight policemen were injured. — SNS

Details on Kolkata Plus 1

## Intuc's no

MUMBAI, April 13. — Intuc will not join the nation-wide industry bandh called by Left parties on 21 April. The organisation's president, Mr G Sanjeeva Reddy, said industry was facing recession and that bandhs were not a solution to the unemployment problem. — PTI



A Catholic penitent on his way to a church in Seville, Spain, on Palm Sunday, the start of the Holy Week. — AFP

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# Coalition storms Saddam's last bastion

Associated Press

BAGHDAD, April 13. — US Marines today entered Mr Saddam Hussein's last bastion, his hometown Tikrit, while a Marine was shot dead at a checkpoint outside a Baghdad clinic. One of the two attackers, carrying a Syrian identity card was killed in the ensuing encounter.

Coalition forces today captured one of Mr Hussein's half-brother, Watban, when he was trying to cross the border into Syria, Kurdish TV said. "Watban Ibrahim Hasan, who served as interior minister, was captured today in Rabia, north-west of Mosul," said the channel, run by Kurdistan Democratic Party.

Another half-brother of Mr Hussein, Barzan al-Takriti, was killed on Friday morning when his farm, west of Baghdad, was bombed by coalition aircraft.

As some units of a Marine task force entered Tikrit, 180 km from Baghdad, after a swift advance from the capital, exchanges of artillery and automatic weapons fire rang out. The ground assault was accompanied by air raid. A US commander said five Iraqi tanks had been destroyed on the outskirts and at least 15 people killed in firefights.

Coalition aircraft resumed bombing in the evening, ignoring an appeal by 22 tribal leaders of Tikrit for an end to the assault so that peaceful surrender of pro-



An Iraqi man carries his mother on their way back to Baghdad on Sunday. They left the capital during bombing by coalition forces. — AFP (More war reports on page 2)

Saddam militia there could be negotiated. Yussuf Abdul Aziz al Nassari, a tribal leader, said the leaders of the main tribes in

Tikrit had asked for 48 hours to persuade the fedayeen to lay down their arms after the end of US attacks. "We are ready to

surrender, but let them stop their bombardments. After that we are asking for just two days to persuade the fedayeen to surrender."

CNN vehicles came under small-arms fire when they tried to enter the city centre. A CNN security guard returned fire at least twice before the news crew drove away. Two members of the team were slightly injured.

Several residents, carrying Kalashnikov rifles and grenades, told journalists that they would surrender to US soldiers only if these were not accompanied by Shi'ites and Kurds, who had been opposing Mr Hussein's regime.

US Marines also entered Kut unhindered and in Mosul, a US special forces soldier was shot and wounded while on patrol. Maj. Fred Dummar said the soldier was in a Land Rover, driving past a waving crowd, when a bullet smashed through the rear window and struck his leg.

In Mosul and Kirkuk, calm returned today after two days of looting and communal fighting, with US troops reassuring Turkey by replacing Kurdish fighters in the oil-rich cities. Mosul police was back on the streets today, while vigilantes were also trying to restore order in the city, where 20 people were killed and 200 wounded in the past two days. A move to

## India a model for Chalabi

NEW DELHI, April 13. — Dr. Ahmed Chalabi, the head of the Iraqi National Congress and tipped to lead a post-war government in Iraq, has said that the Indian democratic system should be taken up as a model for his country.

"Democracy in India is a marvel of civilisation. We hope in some respects to have a political system similar to India's," Dr Chalabi, now involved in US-led efforts to form an interim government, told Third Eye TV, which is covering the war for Doordarshan. He said the road to set up a proper democratic system akin to India's would be completed in less than two years, according to a release from Third Eye.

"India is a great country. It is special for us. India has developed on its own and achieved great technological advancement. I am devoted to India and would like to visit the country soon," Dr Chalabi said in his first interview to Indian media. — PTI

Turn to page 2

## Delhi for UN-mandated troops in Iraq

Nilova Roy Chaudhury in New Delhi

April 13. — Baghdad and many parts of Iraq may have descended into chaos and looting, with no functional administration after the collapse of the Saddam Hussein regime, but India favours a swift withdrawal of the US-led coalition forces from that country. And, it would prefer the deployment of a multi-lateral force, mandated by the United Nations, to replace the coalition forces at the earliest, South Block sources indicated.

Officials explained that while that did not mean the coalition troops should leave immediately (as they will not), a proposal could be made to gradually take in multi-lateral troops into Iraq before the coalition forces withdraw, as soon as "within some weeks". Unlike in Afghanistan, India would not be averse to taking part in such a force in Iraq.

UN peacekeepers ("blue hats") are normally sent in to maintain peace once it has been established in a war zone. But in recent times, the UN has

modified this mandate to include peacemaking as one of the functions of the UN's "blue hats", including in Kosovo and Sierra Leone, where they have been required to make peace between warring factions.

Though Iraq is not Kosovo, officials were quick to point out that a UN-mandated force would carry greater legitimacy among Arab countries, specially among dissident groups that have the support of one or the other of Iraq's neighbouring countries like Syria and Iran.

The unanimous resolution adopted by Parliament earlier by the US President, Mr George W Bush, and the British Prime Minister, Mr Tony Blair, have said they favour a more "vital" role for multi-lateral agencies, "including the UN" in Iraq. This, according to observers, could mean the deployment of UN peacekeepers, and not merely a role in reconstruction efforts for war-ravaged Iraq.

The US President, Mr George W Bush, and the British Prime Minister, Mr Tony Blair, have said they favour a more "vital" role for multi-lateral agencies, "including the UN" in Iraq. This, according to observers, could mean the deployment of UN peacekeepers, and not merely a role in reconstruction efforts for war-ravaged Iraq.

## No prize money for champions

DHAKA, April 13. — It's now time for some damage control measures by Bangladesh Cricket Board for its earlier fumbling.

After Mr Ali Ashgar Loby confessed that he was in the dark about the total prize money involved in the ongoing TVS Cup tri-nation series, BCB adviser and Cricket Committee chairman Mr Mahbubul Anam has said no prize money is on offer for either the winners or the runners-up. Accordingly, the champions will only receive the trophy. The Man-of-the-Match cash awards (\$1,200) and Man-of-the-Tournament cheque (\$2,400), however, are on.

Explaining the change in plans, Mr Anam said the BCB had signed a contract with GraminPhone for providing the cash awards in the two categories. Later, the board came to know that Cup sponsors ESPN-Star Sports had already purchased those award rights for \$15,000.

Disclosing that the BCB has an existing five-year contract worth \$11.75 million with ESPN-Star Sports, Mr Anam said the sponsorship rights for the ongoing series was handed over to the TV channel a couple of years back. — SNS

Unlike in Afghanistan, India would not be averse to taking part in such a multi-lateral force

## PM's Rs 500-cr largesse for Sikkim

Statesman News Service

GANGTOK, 13 April. — The Prime Minister announced a Rs 500-crore special package for Sikkim today aimed at infrastructure development and improved healthcare, fulfilling the long-pending demands of the state and signaling a major achievement of the Chamling government.

Speaking at a public felicitation ceremony at Tashi Namgyal Academy grounds here, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee announced that the Centre would grant Rs 110 crore for the construction of an airport in Pakyong, about 32 km from here, the groundwork for which has already been started by the Airport Authority of India. The Prime Minister also said the Centre would assist the state in improving National Highway 31A, considered Sikkim's lifeline, adding that a special grant would be provided for an alternative highway along the northern banks of the Teesta, connecting the state with the rest of the country.

Addressing a mammoth crowd, Mr Vajpayee said the Centre would consider extending the East-West Corridor to Sikkim and linking it with the Golden Quadrilateral project. "Roads are extremely important for development of the country, and for smaller states like Sikkim, they play a very vital role," he said, pointing out better

- Rs 110 crore for Pakyong airport
- East-west Corridor likely to be extended to state
- Central grant for modernisation of STNM hospital

roads could boost Sikkim's tourism industry, which can well turn out to be the state's biggest industry. To ensure that, he asked the state government to effect adequate infrastructure development.

The Prime Minister also announced Central grant for modernisation of the government-run STNM Hospital at Gangtok. A detailed project

report would be soon prepared in this regard by the National Hospital Construction Corporation, he said. In the meantime, the STNM Hospital would be linked with AIIMS, New Delhi through Tele-medicine connectivity, to facilitate instant consultation of local doctors with New Delhi specialists.

Mr Vajpayee lauded the Chamling government for the rapid pace of development in the state and implementation of various welfare schemes. He also praised the high standard of education in the state while assuring that the state government's demand for increased educational quota for Sikkimese students would be considered.

Mr Vajpayee, while acknowledging validity of the Chamling government's demands, declared: "The Centre will always be receptive to the needs of Sikkim. Delhi dur hai par par Sikkim hamare dil main hai."

Mr Chamling had met Mr Vajpayee at Raj Bhawan on Friday and submitted a memorandum outlining the various pending demands of the state.

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## Sharon's Strategy

"One has to view things realistically. Eventually there will be a Palestinian state. I do not think that we have to rule over another people and run their lives." These are the last words you'd expect from Israel's hardline prime minister Ariel Sharon. At a time when Israel's mentor America is flush with victory over Iraq and is training its guns on Syria, you'd have thought Mr Sharon would be somewhat less restrained. Yet, Mr Sharon has actually spoken of making concessions on settlements and has invited the Palestinian Authority's prime minister Abu Mazen (Mahmood Abbas) for talks. What explains this change of heart in a man viscerally opposed to any accommodation with the Palestinians? Cynics would say that it is because he is under increasing pressure from the Bush administration to adhere to a road map for peace so that Washington has one less impediment in its task of 'cleaning up' the fractious region. In recent times, Tony Blair has been vocal, much to Mr Sharon's wrath, on the subject of a negotiated settlement with the Palestinians. With widespread, though muted, discontent across the Arab world at the manner in which Washington has subdued Iraq, devastated the world's oldest civilisation and announced its expansionist designs for the region, Israel could well be a soft target for terrorism.

Mr Sharon probably figures that conciliatory moves at this juncture could well deflect anger against Israel and lessen possibilities of suicide attacks. But perhaps the most significant factor for Israel's new stance is the change in composition of the Palestinian Authority. The Authority is bitterly divided with Abu Mazen locked in a power struggle with seasoned warhorse and chairman Yasser Arafat. For the moment, Abu Mazen is on top and has appointed a number of key aides to crucial positions in the government despite Mr Arafat's opposition. Abu Mazen is popular within the Palestinian territories and the Israelis are far better disposed towards him than towards Mr Arafat. The Palestinian cause has long been espoused by the region's regimes as a justification for hostility against Israel. Saddam Hussein never passed up an opportunity to equate his struggle against western imperialism with the struggle of the Palestinian people against Zionism. It makes eminent sense for Israel to come to some accommodation with the Palestinians since it has to co-exist with the Arab regimes long after Washington has left the region. But whatever Mr Sharon's motives, any move which can defuse tensions and lessen the terrible human toll must be welcomed and built upon.

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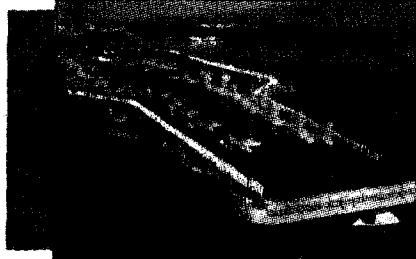
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## Sinha calls Powell

NEW DELHI, April 16. — Mr Yashwant Sinha tonight called Gen. Colin Powell to try and get an update on the coalition's plans for Iraq's future. During the almost 30-minute talk, Mr Sinha suggested that the UN should be more involved in the post-war reconstruction of Iraq. Earlier in the day, US ambassador to India Mr Robert Blackwill met Mr LK Advani and is understood to have discussed Iraq. — SNS

## Mayor

GANDHINAGAR, April 16. — The Congress today elected Ms Aneesa Mirza as the mayor of Ahmedabad. This is the first time a woman from the minority community will hold this post. — SNS

## KLM flights

KOLKATA, April 16. — KLM will resume its flight from Amsterdam to Kolkata via Delhi every Wednesday from 7 May. The airlines withdrew its flights from NSC Bose Airport from 10 July 2002. The flight will arrive in Kolkata at 1:55 a.m. and leave at 3:45 a.m. after a one hour-50 minute halt. — SNS

## Confidence



Rachel Weisz, who features in Dustin Hoffman starrer *Confidence*, arrives at the film's premiere at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences in Beverly Hills. — PTI

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# \$100 m for state corporations from blacklisted agency

Subhendu Maity in Kolkata

April 16. — Three state transport corporations and the West Bengal Sports Council have signed loan agreements with a US funding agency that, documents with The Statesman show, is blacklisted by the Reserve Bank of India. The borrowers have informed neither the Centre nor the state finance department about the loan agreement. They reportedly didn't even inform their respective administrative departments.

It is mandatory for any state government agency to seek prior approval of the state finance department as well as the Centre for entering into such agreements for foreign funding.

The individual agreements the corporations — South Bengal State Transport Corporation, North Bengal State Transport Corporation, West Bengal Surface Transport Corporation — and the Council signed with the agency, the World Economic Fund, Federal Reserve, Berlin and USA, involve a sum about \$100

million. The RBI had blacklisted the agency for not complying with its norms.

The move to borrow money from the funding agency has sparked a controversy within the transport and sports departments at Writers' Buildings, it is learnt. Sources said the state finance department has reportedly objected to the agreements and a senior official spoken to by The Statesman in this connection was adamant that the department got

Turn to page 2

## Two strikes, but Jay Kay's not out

IN January, the RBI's Exchange Control Department had turned down the Calcutta Tramways Company's move to procure a loan from the same funding agency. The CTC had gone ahead and "arranged" to borrow about \$100 million from the agency for its underwater tram service connecting Kolkata with Howrah. Mr Sudhir Kumar De, former chairman cum managing director, CTC, had contacted the agency, again through Jay Kay Enterprises, and arranged for the funds without taking the state government's permission.

But the RBI authorities had rejected the move saying: "The World Economic Fund, Federal Reserve, Berlin and USA, are not internationally recognised category for raising ECB under automatic route as mentioned in ECB guidelines issued by the Government of India."

The RBI had further stated: "We have not granted any permission to any firm. As per our records, Shri Jayanta Biswas, partner of Jay Kay Enterprise approached us for obtaining such permission which has been rejected by us."

## BUSH FOR LIFTING OF SANCTIONS

# Franks in Baghdad

Agencies

BAGHDAD, April 16. — Coalition commander Gen. Tommy Franks visited Baghdad for the first time today after the Iraq war started, while the USA announced a reward of \$200,000 on the heads of Mr Saddam Hussein and his aides.

In Mosul, four persons were killed and several injured when US troops fired on a mob that attacked the Americans near a government building, while about 200 Shi'ites, led by clerics, held a demonstration in protest against the presence of US Marines in Baghdad.

President George W Bush today called for lifting of UN sanctions on Iraq now that Mr Hussein's regime has "passed into history".

A central command spokesman in Qatar said Gen. Franks was visiting Baghdad to meet his officers there. On Sunday, Gen. Franks had told a TV channel that the trip would have "the purpose of seeing my people who are doing the hard work".

The USA today distributed posters,

with names and photographs, offering rewards for information on Mr Hussein and his aides, who are on a list of 55 most-wanted Iraqis. "These men are wanted for crimes against the Iraqi people," the caption on the posters said. "Any information leading to their arrests is worth up to \$200,000."

Violence flared in Mosul for the second consecutive day today. US forces admitted that they were responsible for shooting seven of the 15 people killed there yesterday.

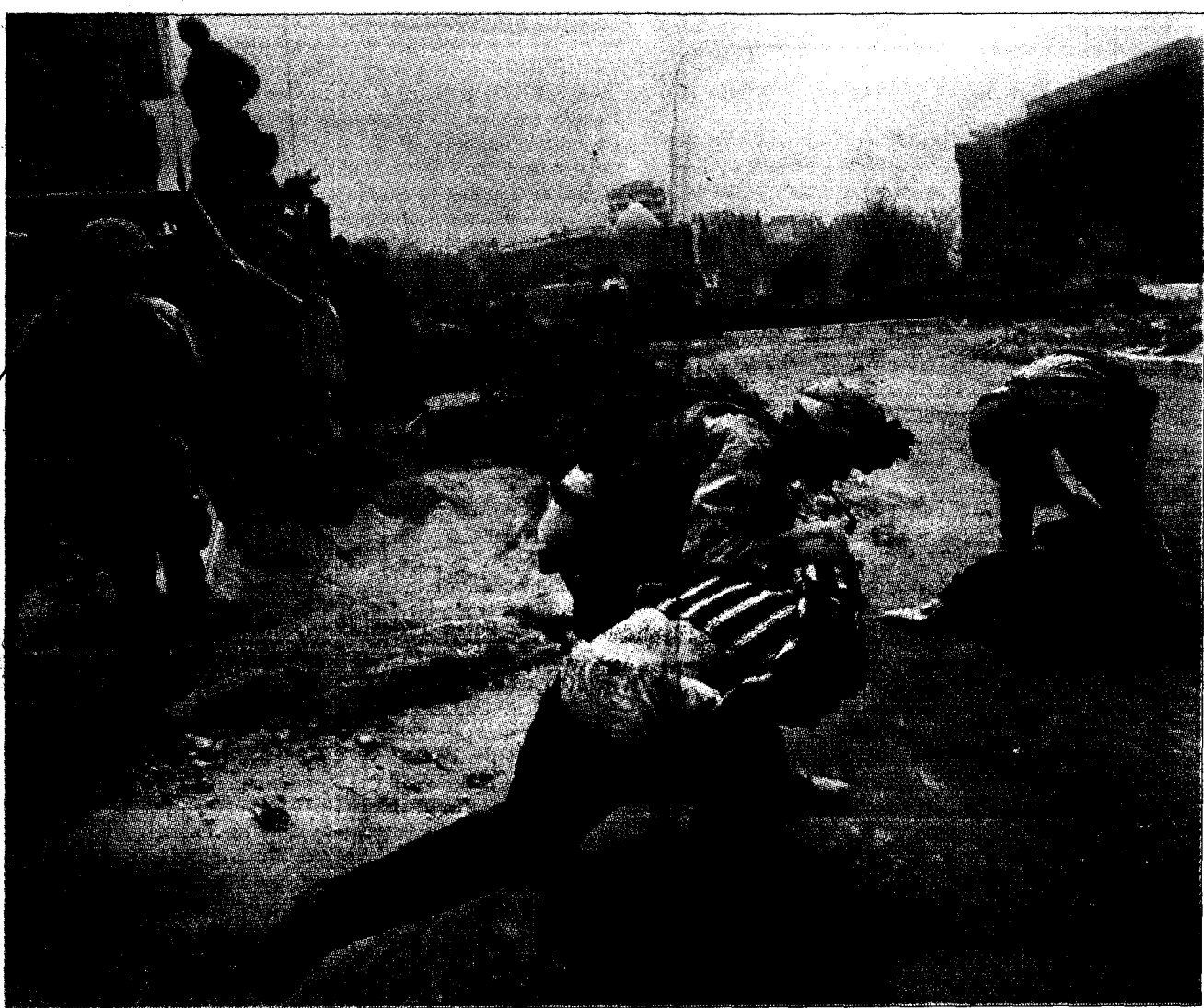
In today's clashes, at least four people were killed and several wounded by gunshots near a government building. Witnesses said that US troops fired on a crowd from the rooftop of the building, but a US Marine denied the charge.

"There was no firing on the crowd today," he said. "Someone started shooting on us; we subsequently returned fire."

In Baghdad, US forces hailed the capture of Abu Abbas, the Palestinian who masterminded the 1985 hijacking of the Italian liner *Achille Lauro*, as proof that the Iraqi regime "harboured terrorists".



Gen. Tommy Franks



US soldiers overpowered Iraqis arrested for allegedly firing on coalition troops in Baghdad. At a military base in the capital on Wednesday. — AFP

One week after the coalition's capture of Baghdad, an increasing number of the city's residents returned to work today. The main emphasis was on repairing the damaged power and water supply systems. "The priority among priorities is electricity," said Mr Osama Zubeidi, an en-

gineer who offered his services to US forces. A "message" from the Marines asked Baghdad residents not to venture out between evening and morning prayers.

In Saint Louis in Missouri, Mr Bush said: "Now that Iraq is liberated, the UN should lift economic sanctions on that

country." A White House spokesman said the USA will soon offer a resolution ending the UN's "oil-for-food" programme to enable Iraq to export oil freely.

More reports and photographs on page 2

## Nor'wester claims 4 in state



The scene at Esplanade on Wednesday evening, when a Nor'wester struck the city and other parts of South Bengal. — The Statesman

Statesman News Service

KOLKATA, April 16. — A Nor'wester lashed South Bengal this evening, claiming four lives: two in Kolkata and one each in Burdwan and Howrah. Trees and electric poles were uprooted in several places, throwing life out of gear.

The squall, which lasted two minutes (7.34-7.36 p.m.), had winds attaining a maximum speed of 102 km per hour.

Shakil Ahmed (41) was electrocuted when an electric pole fell over the shed under which he was standing on Circular Garden Reach Road. Police rescued four people trapped under a shelter near Victoria Memorial (south gate) after a tree fell on it. One of them, RS Sharma (40), died in hospital.

At Shibpur in Howrah, Anju Adhikary (30) died after being struck by lightning, while at Jamuria in Burdwan, Dhananjay Majhi (26), a vegetable vendor, met the same fate when he was on his way to a market.

The city had 26 mm rainfall and several roads were flooded, adding to the congestion. Trees were uprooted on Baker Road, Alipore Road, Belvedere Road, Kidderpore Road, Theatre Road, Park Street, Hazra Road and in several parts of

Turn to page 2

## Togadia charged with sedition

Statesman News Service

JAIPUR, April 16. — The Rajasthan government today charged VHP general secretary Mr Praveen Togadia with sedition and disturbing communal harmony in the state. He has been remanded in judicial custody till 30 April.

Mr Togadia, arrested on Monday in Ajmer, was produced before judicial magistrate Ms Indu Pareek today. The government counsel submitted that the VHP leader has also been charged with conspiracy to dislodge an elected government under Section 121-A and for inciting communal sentiments. The counsel produced a video CD of Mr Togadia's speech in Ajmer in support of the charges.

But the VHP leader's counsel argued that any public address against the state government was not *rajdroh* (sedition). Mr Togadia said the *trishul* (trident) was attached to Hindus' religious sentiments and the state government cannot ban it.

Rejecting the VHP leader's bail plea, the magistrate said it was in the sessions court's jurisdiction to decide on the bail for such a serious charge. Earlier, Mr Togadia was remanded in judicial custody for two days after his arrest while returning from a *trishul diksha* (trident distribution) programme in Ajmer.

Three VHP leaders arrested in Ajmer on Sunday for possessing 150 *trishuls* today refused to seek bail "as long as Mr Togadia is in jail".

The state BJP and VHP criticised the sedition charge against Mr Togadia and alleged that the move had exposed the Gehlot government's "anti-Hindu attitude". VHP chief Mr Ashok Singhal today left for Ajmer to decide on the next course of action. The Congress welcomed the government's move.

Amar Singh says it with swords, page 4

## OPP. BOYCOTT DECISION AFTER 22 APRIL Left Front (just about) wins panchayat polls!

Statesman News Service

KOLKATA, April 16. — The last day for filing nominations for the panchayat elections came and went today, with the Trinamul Congress saying a decision on whether to boycott the polls would be taken by the party and its ally the BJP after the last date for withdrawal of nominations on 22 April. But, crucially, unless the polls are postponed or Articles 355 or 356 is imposed in the state — both unlikely scenarios as things stand — the Left Front is already through.

The figures speak for themselves — the Left Front has filed nominations for all, 58,000 plus seats up for grabs in the gram panchayats, panchayat samitis and zilla parishads (in fact, around 70,000 nominations have been filed by all Left partners put together but some withdrawals are expected once seat-sharing is finalised). The Trinamul Congress-BJP has managed

to file nominations for about 38,000 seats.

Frustrated at the CPI-M's "use of muscle-power in preventing Opposition candidates from filing nominations," Miss Mamata Banerjee today said the two parties would sit together and take a decision on whether to boycott the polls.

Miss Banerjee said that according to her information, Trinamul Congress and the BJP had not been able to file nominations for about 20,000 seats, attributing the figures to information received from district party units. "I will be able to get the exact figures after a few days. Sensing defeat, the CPI-M prevented our candidates through intimidation from filing nominations. Bengal is a fit case for imposition of Article 356. The Centre can also invoke Article 355 as lawlessness is rampant here," the Trinamul chief said. Her partymen would take to the

Turn to page 2  
Uncontested victories unfortunate: FB, page 5

## CPM wins uncontested

MIDNAPORE, April 16. — CPI-M candidates were today declared elected uncontested in 218 gram panchayat seats in Keshpur, 126 in Garbeta block I and 77 in Chandrakona II in Midnapore West district as the Congress, Trinamul and BJP did not file nominations.

CPI-M candidates were declared elected uncontested in 42 panchayat samiti seats in Keshpur, 19 in Garbeta I and 13 in Chandrakona II and in three zilla parishad seats each in Keshpur and Garbeta I and two in Chandrakona II.

In Burdwan, the Trinamul Congress and CPI-ML alleged that several of their candidates could not file nomination today because of the Left Front's "terror tactics". The CPI-M, however, denied the charges. — SNS

# Sharon softens

5/16 Are changes afoot in the Mideast? 1374

Ariel Sharon is giving out interesting signals — he has told an Israeli newspaper that a Palestinian state is inevitable, and that he would be willing, for the sake of peace, to remove some Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza strip. This softening of stance is welcome, although qualified by the readiness to give up only “some” settlements in occupied areas. Sharon may be treading carefully to prepare Israeli public opinion for some concessions to the Palestinians — he realises these are inevitable to placate the Arab world, inflamed by the Iraq conflict. Washington needs to show some compensating moves — and defining an early Israeli position for negotiations is a good move. Sharon is also dependent on rightwing allies who see Jewish rights over Arab land as God-given and ineluctable. Besides, President Bush has been holding off on announcing the “roadmap” which is supposed to follow the promise to create a Palestinian state by 2005. It was slated for publication after Israeli elections, which were completed early this year; it is now being given out that the roadmap will follow after Mahmoud Abbas, the recently appointed Palestinian premier has formed his cabinet. Here, however, President Arafat may prove to be a roadblock; he is refusing to approve the new look reformist cabinet that Abbas has selected.

It is arguable that even the publication of a roadmap will not by itself secure peace, as it sets up several intermediate stages that are supposed to build “trust”. The problem with such an approach is that the peace process can be held hostage by those who stand to lose from it, whether Jewish settlers or Hamas, as acts of violence by either could be used to “prove” that necessary trust does not exist. This has been the problem with the Oslo peace accords, which had too many stages that could be exploited by those not reconciled. It may be time for a bold move to impose a final settlement, broadly in the form of West Bank, Gaza, and bits of Jerusalem for the Palestinians, in return for impeccable security guarantees for the Israelis. The Americans could persuade the Syrians to stop sponsoring Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad. Washington and London need to “win hearts and minds” in West Asia in order to secure their own interests; facilitating a satisfactory settlement of the Palestinian problem would certainly go a long way.

THE STATESMAN

17 APR 2005

# US commandos capture Palestinian guerrilla leader

Washington: US commandos in



A. Abbas

Baghdad have captured Abul Abbas, the leader of the violent Palestinian group that killed an American on the hijacked Italian cruise liner 'Achille Lauro' in 1985, US officials have said.

Abbas was taken by American special operations forces during a raid on Monday night on the outskirts of the Baghdad, the officials said on Tuesday, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Several of his associates also were detained during raids at several sites around Baghdad, defence officials said.

Commandos, tipped off by US

- US commandos seize documents, weapons
- Several associates of Abbas detained during raid
- Italy to seek extradition

intelligence to Abbas' whereabouts, also seized documents and weapons.

The man known as Abul Abbas, whose name actually is Mohammed Abbas, led a faction of the Palestine Liberation Front, a Palestinian splinter group.

His faction operated out of Tunisia until the October 1985 attack on the Achille Lauro, after which it relocated to Iraq. His group was also responsible for some attacks in Israel.

"He got away from us, and we've been chasing him ever since," said Vince Cannistraro, a former CIA counterterrorism chief. "He's a big catch for us. It's an old score to settle."

Abbas, either 61 or 62, had eluded arrest since four of his followers hijacked the Achille Lauro as it sailed from Egypt to Israel in October 1985.

They demanded that Israel release 50 imprisoned Palestinians.

During the hijacking, his followers shot and killed Jewish-American passenger Leon Klinghoffer. The hijacking ended after Egypt negotiated with the hijackers.

Italy said it would seek the extradition of Abbas, justice minister Roberto Castelli said in Rome on Wednesday. Reuters

THE TELEGRAPH

17 APR 1985

## West Asia should be free of dangerous arms: Powell <sup>WJ</sup> <sub>WBJ</sub>



Colin Powell

Washington: US secretary of state Colin Powell has said that West Asia should be free of all weapons of mass destruction and hoped that a comprehensive peace process would help create a Palestinian state living side by side in peace with Israel.

"We would like to see a region that is free of all weapons of mass destruction," Mr Powell said on Tuesday when asked at a press conference as to why he does not name Israel, which reportedly has weapons of mass destruction, when calling upon Syria and other countries not to develop such weapons.

"And I hope that if we can move forward with a comprehensive peace process that leads to a comprehensive solution that creates a Palestinian state living side by side in peace with the Jewish state and ultimately have that comprehensive solution reach out and touch Lebanon and Syria, then I think a lot of pieces will begin to fall in place with respect to what people's various needs are," he said at the US state department's foreign press centre.

"But right now, we will just continue to say that we believe that the entire region should be free of weapons of mass destruction."

Mr Powell said once Abu Mazen was confirmed by a vote of confidence as the prime minister of the Palestine Liberation Council, "we will release the road map as it was fi-

nalised last December. And we hope that both parties will use this road map as a way of reaching the vision that the president laid out in his speech of June 24, last year."

"And that also is the vision that was laid out by the Arab League nations following the initiative of Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia."

Mr Powell said that democratic values have to ultimately come from within a society and within a nation because they believe that is the best way for them to move forward. "We will see how this develops in the various countries of West Asia and the Persian Gulf in the months and years ahead," he said.

Mr Powell expressed hope that with the example of Turkey as a democratic nation and with a new example now of Iraq as a democratic nation—"two strong Muslim nations"—showing that democracy is not something that has to be alien to Muslims and can work for Muslims.

"People throughout that part of the world will realise the benefits that come when they have a democratic form of government that is responsive to the needs of the people, uses the wealth of the country to the benefit of the people," he said.

He hoped that would become a more and more attractive political system throughout the region, as it was in many other parts of the world. "There should be no reason that we should be fearful of democracy in West Asia or in the Gulf region," Mr Powell said. "But each nation will have to find its own way."

# Delhi readies Syria team

PRANAY SHARMA

**New Delhi, April 15:** After "deploring" US military action in Iraq through a parliamentary resolution, India has decided to send an official delegation to Syria — the country Washington accuses of harbouring key members of Saddam Hussein's regime and of building weapons of mass destruction.

Syria has denied both charges, but is coming under increasing US pressure.

The decision to send a team led by R.M. Abhayankar, secretary (east) in the foreign ministry, to Damascus at this juncture has raised eyebrows both within and outside South Block.

Abhayankar and his teammates will also visit Turkey and

Jordan to make an assessment of the situation in the region after Saddam's fall. The trip is scheduled early next week.

The resolution passed by Parliament criticising the US war has already strained relations between New Delhi and Washington. The decision to engage with the Syrian regime will not go down well with the Bush administration either.

While some members of the Indian establishment argued that the trip to Syria could have been avoided, others said that as the US has shown little sensitivity to India's concerns over Pakistan, Delhi should take steps in its national interest.

Another reason for sending Abhayankar to Syria could be Delhi's inability to decide on

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's official visit to Damascus. Vajpayee was due to visit Syria and some other countries in the region when it became clear that the US would attack Iraq and the trip had to be called off. By sending a senior diplomat, India wants to reassure Syria that it will continue to engage with the country despite America's charges.

India's humanitarian aid to Iraq appears set to be put on hold. Delhi had announced a \$20-million food and medicine package.

But the UN, through which the foodgrain will be routed, has said its warehouses are full. This means the 50,000 tonnes of wheat India plans to send will take some time to reach Iraq.

16 APR 2003

## Weapons of Disruption

On the weekend, a crucial disclosure came from Hans Blix, UN's chief weapons inspector and head of the team that went into Iraq to find and destroy its weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Mr Blix's discomfort with the Anglo-American line on Iraq has been apparent for a while, and now he has come out in the open to accuse the US and UK of having made up their minds in advance to attack Iraq. He also said neither country was really interested in finding WMD. Mr Blix's words confirm what has long been suspected: That the WMD served as a pretext for the war. The Bush-Blair team couldn't wait for the UN inspection team to find the weapons, not because the latter posed a huge and immediate danger to the world, but because the weapons might not have been found. Indeed, the offensive weapons have not shown up anywhere in Iraq. Was the attack on Iraq, then, deliberately mounted on a false premise? The world at large would be justified in reaching that conclusion, whether or not the US now finds WMD in Iraq. For logic dictates that in its dying moments a regime would use whatever weapon it possessed to protect itself.

Unfortunately, the story looks set to go into its second act, with Syria playing villain. Barely had Baghdad fallen, when president Bush and others started issuing not-so-veiled threats to Syria against harbouring members of Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath party. There were also dark hints about Saddam having moved his WMD into Syria. There is little Syria can do about this charge, given the way the US went about establishing WMD in Iraq. That Syria's government is run by a branch of the Ba'ath party further complicates matters for the country. Understandably, the current crackdown on the Ba'ath movement has created fears in Syria's ruling circles. Yet, in strictly legal terms, Syria has done no wrong. Mere membership of the Ba'ath party, a legitimate political entity with an ideology centred around secular Arab nationalism, cannot be held to be a crime. As for providing sanctuary to Iraqi officials, under the convention on the status of refugees, Syria is bound to accept those fleeing from persecution. If the standards now being applied to Syria were extended further eastward, India could find itself on a sticky wicket. India possesses WMD and it has been included by the CIA among those who helped Libya build its ballistic missile programme.

16 APR 2003



# Plan for postwar Iraq kicks off

By Jane Perlez

**Kuwait:** Representatives of some of Iraq's often-quarrelsome factions met on Tuesday in Ur, the ancient Mesopotamian city, to begin shaping the country's post-war government.

Thousands of Shiite Muslims, whose representatives were boycotting the meeting, demonstrated in nearby Nasiriya against the gathering, held at Tallil air base. Many other Iraqis said that they would not attend the meeting and that they opposed US plans to instal retired Lt Gen Jay Garner to run Iraq for the Bush administration.

"It's critical that the world understand that this is only the fledgling first meeting of what will hopefully be a much larger series of meetings across Iraq," said Jim Wilkinson, a spokesman at the US Central Command in Doha, Qatar.

British foreign secretary Jack Straw also sought to dampen expectations about the meeting. "It is not a one-off, it's the beginning of a process to restore governance," he said in Qatar.

The American-led interim administration could begin handing power back to Iraqi officials within three to six months, but forming a government will take longer, said Maj Gen Tim Cross, the top British member of General Garner's team.

General Garner, who was expected to lead the meeting, flew to Iraq on Monday to begin a process he himself predicted would be messy and contentious. But he insisted that American-style democracy could sprout on the shards of President Saddam Hussein's government.

"I don't think they had a love-in when they had Philadelphia" in 1787, he said in an interview here before his departure. "Any time you start the process, it's fraught with dialogue, tensions, coercion, and should be." Iraq, he suggested, could be the richest country in the Middle East within a few years.

The invitations to about 70 to 80 people, including prominent exiles like Ahmad Chalabi and Iraqis unknown to the outside world, were issued in the name of the war commander, Gen Tommy R. Franks, to whom General Garner reports.

For General Garner, who will spend his 65th birthday in Nasiriya,

## US troops fire on Mosul crowd, kill 10

**Mosul:** At least ten persons were shot dead and scores wounded on Tuesday in the northern Iraqi town of Mosul, a hospital doctor said, with witnesses claiming that US troops had opened fire on a crowd after it turned against an American-installed local governor.

Those charges were denied by a US military spokesman here, who said troops had come under fire from at least two gunmen and had fired back, without aiming at the crowd. Three witnesses questioned by AFP and some of the wounded who spoke to the hospital staff said US troops had fired on the crowd, which had become increasingly hostile towards governor Mashaan al-Juburi as he was making a pro-US speech.

In Doha, Brig Gen Vincent Brooks said he had seen no military reports of the incident and could not confirm it. But the military spokesman in Mosul later said, "There were protesters outside, 100 to 150. There was fire. We returned fire." AFP

greeting and cajoling Iraqis he has never met before, the politics of Iraq is just one of the major tasks ahead.

General Garner, appointed by President Bush in January to oversee aid, reconstruction and civil government in Iraq, will be the most visible American face on what many in the Middle East and Europe view as a singularly American enterprise which, in their opinion, should be more international in scope and sensibility. Many European governments believe that the United Nations should play a more central role.

General Garner will oversee how \$2.4 billion authorised by Congress last week will be spent in Iraq. He will pass judgment on problems like setting up television stations and selecting a police force for a population of 24 million in 17 provinces. His voice will be important when Washington decides how to revive the Iraqi oil industry and how quickly to seek to lift UN sanctions. NYT News Service

16 APR 2003

# Arafat rejects PM's Cabinet

Robert Tait/The Times, London

JERUSALEM, April 15. — The revival of the West Asia peace process is under threat after the rejection by Mr Yasser Arafat of a Cabinet proposed by the man he chose to be Prime Minister.

Palestinian sources say the Palestinian Authority leader is furious at the choices of the Prime Minister-designate Mr Mahmoud Abbas, because they exclude many of his own supporters. He is understood to be particularly angry at moves to give responsibility for security to Mohammad Dahlan, who is respected by USA and Israel. Mr Arafat's opposition could delay or even block approval of the proposed new Cabinet by Palestinian deputies. The US President has made publication of an international peace "road map", which plans for an independent Palestinian State by 2005, conditional on the swearing-in of Mr Abbas's new government.

Mr Arafat created the post of Prime Minister under pressure from America and Israel, who refused to deal with him and demanded a new Palestinian leadership. Mr Abbas, widely known as Abu Mazen, presented his proposed 22-member Cabinet, made up of many reform-minded technocrats in line with international demands, to Mr Arafat on Sunday. According to local reports, Mr Arafat threw the list on the floor in disgust. Sources also suggest that American officials were told of the list's contents before Mr Arafat. Because of Mr Arafat's objections, a planned meeting of the central committee of his Fatah organisation to approve the new Cabinet was postponed.

The dispute comes after weeks of tension between Mr Abbas and Mr Arafat over the Prime Minister's powers and his chosen Cabinet. Mr Abbas was given a two-week extension to form a government after reports that he had threatened to resign because of frustration over Mr Arafat's alleged interference. At the heart of the disagreement is the status of Mr Dahlan. Mr Dahlan and Mr Abbas have both criticised militant attacks on Israeli targets.

When Mr Arafat objected, pressing the case for ally, Mr Hani al-Hasan, Mr Abbas tried to resolve the dispute by appointing himself interior minister. Mr Arafat was still not satisfied.

Mr Abbas was hoping to present his Cabinet this week, but the last-minute manoeuvring threatened another delay. President Bush has expressed impatience in the drawn-out negotiations.

16 APR 2003



# Anglo-American axis trains guns on Syria

TIMES NEWS NETWORK AND  
AGENCIES

**Washington/London:** Signalling a new muscular approach after the Iraq war and sending tremors throughout the Arab world, the US has now warned Syria of consequences if it does not stop cross-border exfiltration and harbouring fugitives of the Saddam Hussein regime.

Secretary of State Colin Powell said on Monday that the US would consider imposing economic and diplomatic sanctions against Syria for its support for members of Mr Hussein's regime.

"We will examine possible measures of a diplomatic, economic or other nature as we move forward," he said. "We are in touch with Syrian authorities, and will make them aware of our concerns, and we'll see how things unfold," he said.

Across the Atlantic, in a remarkably calibrated pincer movement, London publicly and chillingly confirmed it too "had concerns about Syria for quite some time". But Britain said it had no intention of invading Syria after Iraq.

Washington has stopped short of threatening war against Syria, but the menace is unmistakable as several top US officials have turned the heat on Syria over the weekend. President George W. Bush joined his cabinet principals on Sunday in rebuking Syria for failing to cooperate with the US, and going public with the assertion that Damascus had chemical weapons, a long-standing US suspicion that has never been aired openly.

"Each situation will require a different response. First things first. We're in Iraq now," Mr Bush told reporters on Sunday amidst widespread speculation in the international diplomatic community that Washington was lining up Syria after it finishes with Iraq.

Similar warnings to Syria were issued by Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who said in the course of a televi-

sion interview that "the Syrian government is making a lot of bad mistakes, a lot of bad judgment calls, in my view, and they're associating with the wrong people". Asked if Syria was next on the US hit-list, he said, "That's above my pay grade. Those are the kinds of things that countries and Presidents decide."

On the other hand, in a babel of confusing soundbites, Tony Blair's cabinet big-hitters alternately cautioned and cajoled Syria on Monday, even as they repeatedly denied it was next on the hit-list of the Anglo-American alliance.

Foreign secretary Jack Straw said there was "much evidence of considerable co-operation between the Syrian government and the Saddam regime", but added, "Syria is not next on the list. There is no next list."

Defence secretary Geoff Hoon said, "Our immediate

concern is the risk that some of those involved in Iraq's WMD programmes might escape across the border into Syria, obviously boosting Syria's own efforts in those directions."

But British officials were unable to provide answers to this paper at the time of writing about Mr Hoon's claims on Monday that the UK government had submitted a memo to parliament more than a year ago expressing concern about a Syrian banned weapons programme.

London warned Damascus to be forthcoming on three counts—providing information on its "unlawful holdings (of chemical weapons)", physical and human intelligence on "fugitives from Saddam's regime" who are alleged to have fled from Iraq into Syria and "answers to important questions (about) whether they have been developing any kind of illegal or illegitimate chemical or biological programmes".

As part of his carrot-and-stick approach, Mr Blair spoke to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on Sunday, while despatching foreign office minister Mike O'Brien to talk turkey with Damascus on Monday.

But in a significant give-away, the British foreign office issued an updated travel advice to its nationals, warning of a "high threat" of terrorist attacks that "could involve the use of chemical or biological materials".

In response to the Anglo-American charges, Syria said, "Of course, Syria has no chemical weapons," and pointed to the case of Iraq where the presence of these weapons had not been confirmed so far. A foreign ministry spokesperson said, "I would like to say that there are biological, chemical and nuclear weapons of mass destruction in West Asia. They are in Israel, not in Syria," she said.

● Related reports on Page 11  
● See Edit: Victory & Vandalism, Page 12

## On the battlefield



- US troops gain control of Tikrit
- US Marines engage in heavy gun battle with snipers outside Hotel Palestine in Baghdad
- Top Iraqi nuclear scientist Jaffar al Jaffar surrenders in Iraq: US
- All Iraqi oilfields now fall within allied-controlled areas
- Russia blames US forces for allowing sacking of Baghdad's archaeological museum

15 APR 2003

# Thieves of Baghdad

Iraq's suffering continues unabated

The cities of "liberated" Iraq, Baghdad included, are fast running out of food, water and medical supplies. Lack of availability of international aid, however, is not the problem, there is plenty standing by in Kuwait or in ships docked at Umm Qasr port. The problem is that the aid cannot be moved to the people who need it, as in every city that fell to the coalition forces anarchy reigned, looters took over the streets, some armed groups even fought each other for the spoils. That was the story in Baghdad, Basra and Mosul — the sole exception being Kirkuk, to which we will come later for the lessons it offers. Red Cross workers have been killed, and one of Baghdad's largest hospitals has been stripped clean of its equipment, rendering it unworkable. In Baghdad the looting went on for four days under the eyes of coalition troops, who stood aloof. Belated steps are at last being taken to restore order, but not before the National Museum of Antiquities, which held priceless antiquities from early civilizations on the Euphrates and the Tigris, was stripped of anything valuable. Both Washington and London held the view that it is not the job of soldiers to become policemen; White House spokesman Ari Fleischer even said that the looting was understandable as a "reaction to oppression". That would have been half-way plausible if the looting had been confined to government ministries or a few top leaders' houses, but Fleischer should know better.

The Red Cross has pointed out that according to the Geneva Convention security, law and order and welfare of the population is the charge of the occupying power; Kofi Annan has also expressed a similar view. Kurdish troops who took over Kirkuk did a far better job at managing the transition than either the British or the Americans — there is little lawlessness there, and electricity, water and hospitals are functioning normally. Their secret is that they went in with a plan for taking over the city's administration as soon as the earlier administration collapsed. Appallingly, coalition forces did not go in with similar plans in the cities that came under their control; a few suicide attacks appear to have rattled them to an extent where they looked incapable of doing much more than watching their backs. Now the Kurds are being asked to leave Kirkuk in order to please the Turks and American tanks are rolling in; one hopes there will not be a repeat of the disorder that took place in other cities that Kirkuk had been spared so far. If security isn't established soon and people's lives noticeably improve, recent Afghan history may repeat itself in Iraq — defeat the enemy of the day (whether the Soviet Union or the Ba'athist regime), declare victory and go home, oblivious of the fact that there is only one thing that can fill the ideological and power vacuum left behind — Islamic fundamentalism. The reverberations of that kind of fundamentalism were felt on September 11, 2001, and may be felt once again.

# Syria has banned weapons: Bush

US @ W time  
 AT 16 15 9

Washington/Bahrain, April 14

US PRESIDENT George W. Bush issued a virtual chargesheet against Syria over the weekend. "There are chemical weapons in Syria." Bush also accused Damascus of harbouring senior Iraqi military and government officials and demanded "cooperation" in punishing them.

An alarmed European Union on Monday urged the US to "cool down". Syrian President Bashar al-Assad held urgent talks with UK Foreign Office Minister Mike O'Brien. However, London insisted there were no plans for military action against Syria.

Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz added to the fire, saying: "The Americans have taken out a 'yellow card' on them, and were right to do so."

Bush stopped short of threatening to use military force against Syria. He said: "First things first. We're in Iraq now." Asked whether Syria was a candidate for his "axis of evil", Bush said, "We will deal with each situation as it arises."

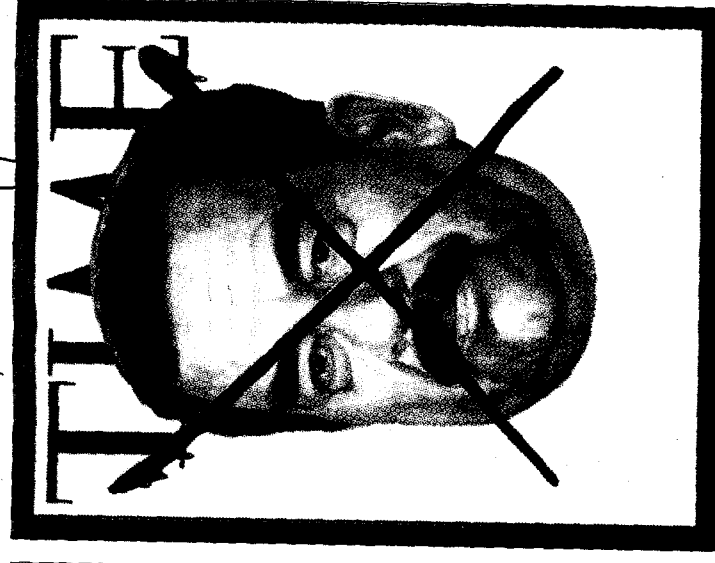
The UK also said Syria had to come clean, but its officials strongly downplayed the prospect of war. "We have made it clear there are no plans for Syria to be next on the list," UK Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said in Bahrain.

Other US officials made plain a growing frustration with Syria. Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld

land," said Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Buthaina Shaaban.

Israel is widely believed to have about 300 nuclear warheads, but its policy is never to discuss the issue. "There was never any cooperation between Damascus and Baghdad, our support was for the Iraqi people who have suffered the plights of wars," Shaaban said.

Israel warned Syria not to "play with fire" after Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shara made a strong anti-Israeli statement on Monday. "Israel is not looking for an escalation with Syria but Damascus is playing with fire by threatening us with its terror arsenal," the official said. For now, Israel was restricting itself to "supporting US efforts to stop Syrian support for terrorism".



58 years later, another dictator is scratched. **2003** Time has a portrait of Saddam that reprises the Hitler cover complete with red 'X'.



Hitler on Time's May 7 cover. In April, the Nazi leader had committed suicide as Soviet troops knocked at his Berlin bunker. **1945**

## US to consider sanctions

The US will consider imposing economic and diplomatic sanctions against Syria for its support for members of Saddam Hussein's former regime in Iraq, US Secretary of State Colin Powell said on Monday. "We will examine possible measures of a diplomatic, economic or other nature as we move forward," Powell told reporters at the State Department. "We are in touch with Syrian authorities and will make them aware of our concerns and we'll see how things unfold as we move forward," he said.

**Agencies**

"We say to him (President Bush) that Syria has no chemical weapons and that the only chemical, biological and nuclear weapons in the region are in Israel, which is threatening its neighbours and occupying their

ing to cross into Syria. Syria denied on Monday US charges that it had chemical weapons and brushing aside British allegations, said it had never cooperated with Saddam Hussein's administration.

said the majority of foreign fighters in Iraq were from Syria, brought in by the "busloads". Rumsfeld noted Syria was on the US list of state sponsors of terrorism.

Hussein's half brother, captured in north Iraq, admitted he was try.

# Uday found it tough to be his father's son

New York, April 14

"IT IS difficult being in the family of Hussein. People want to kill us," Uday, son of Saddam Hussein, wrote to an uncle in 1990 in a letter, which *Time* magazine says was found in Uday's palace in Baghdad.

In the letter, Uday says his father plans to create a greater Iraq that includes Kuwait, Palestine and Arabstan, a region of Iran historically controlled by Baghdad. The note says Saddam is beginning with the easiest — Kuwait, *Time* said on Monday.

The palace, in the Baghdad suburb of Karada, it said, was not Uday's main residence but rather a safe house where he could hide out, as well as, according to a neighbour, a "love

nest", to which Uday would bring his many girlfriends. "There is nothing in my heart towards my father, not any love or kindness. In the end I ask God to keep his house safe," Uday wrote, according to *Time*.

An official letter found in the palace signed by Uday and countersigned by seven witnesses, the magazine said, notes that well-known Opposition Shia leader Thafer Mohammed Jaber was captured on September 3, 1995, and was being kept in one of Saddam's palaces. Jaber, say Iraqis, has not been heard of since.

Among other items found in the palace were videos *License to Kill* (two copies), *Like Father Like Son* and *Loose Cannons*, receipts from Uday's 1989 New Year's party.

W. I. S. 154

A love letter kept by Uday, with a lipstick kiss writes, "Remember me when you listen to Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata, which I heard for the first time with you."

*Time* says its correspondent also found instructions for a Health Diagnostics HIV test. Also found were charred corners of \$100 and \$50 bills. "He used to light cigars with them," a neighbour was quoted as saying.

After American forces entered Iraq, people looted his lavish three-storey home.

The looters, *Time* says, took everything they could, including fuses from the fuse boxes. But they left documents that the magazine says paint a colourful portrait of the unhappy eldest son of Saddam, who hasn't been

seen since reportedly entering the restaurant obliterated by US bombs in the al-Mansur neighbourhood.

Snapshots found in the remains of a darkroom show him fishing with friends, riding a motorbike in a black leather jacket, posing with pet lions and hanging out in shorts and a cowboy hat, *Time* said.

And then there is Uday's university transcript from 1988, the year he was awarded a degree in civil engineering.

"He ranked 1st in a class of 174 students," the transcript reads before detailing his grades: excellent in every subject, except physical training and first aid, in which he was satisfactory, the highest grades offered for such courses.

PTI



Uday Hussein  
Living like a prince

# From Saddam to Shia clerics

K.P. NAYAR

Washington, April 14: The Americans who "liberated" Iraqis from Saddam Hussein's tyranny are finding themselves caught between the devil and the deep sea.

There is concern here that Shia clerics — whose images in black robes, turbans and beards in neighbouring Iran still make Americans stiffen — are quickly filling the void left by the Baath Party.

Yesterday, as millions of Americans sat back complacently and watched images of rescued US prisoners of war, the leadership here was grappling with "disturbing" clips in the European media of looters in Baghdad's Saddam City bringing back cartloads of stolen goods to the Sadjad mosque in this huge Shia slum.

Looted goods, returned by vandals, are now piled high on the premises of Sadjad and other mosques in Saddam City. They have been surrendered following calls by Shia clerics that it is against Islam to steal or to profit from stolen goods.

European TV stations also showed black-turbaned Shia re-

ligious leaders in Saddam City going round in jeeps fitted with loudspeakers preaching peace and order and asking people to keep calm.

Saddam City has already been renamed by its residents: not as Bush city or Blair town to celebrate its "liberation", but as Sadr city.

Imam Sadr of An Najaf was once the "potential" Ayatollah Khomeini of Iraq, but Saddam Hussein had him executed more than two decades ago, thus making him an icon among his country's persecuted and deprived majority Shias.

American officials are already saying their troops did not shed blood to hand over Iraq to Mohammed Bakr al Hakim, the ayatollah who is in exile in Tehran and heads what is known as the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq. An Islamic Republic of Iraq is among the organisation's objectives.



Saddam Hussein's half-brother, Watban Ibrahim Hasan al-Tikriti, captured on Sunday. (Reuters)

Ominously for the Americans, the group has boycotted the meeting in An Nasiriyah tomorrow of sundry Iraqi factions called by the coalition to discuss the country's future.

"We are not going to attend the Nasiriyah meeting because it is not to the benefit of the Iraqi nation," Reuters quoted Abdelaziz Hakim, a leader of the group, as saying.

"From the beginning, independence has been our manifesto. We don't accept a US umbrella or anybody else's. The Iraq nation refuses any dependency," he said.

Washington's problem is that as Iraq descends into chaos, there are only two poles in the country to which its society can be tethered. One is religion and the other is the Baath Party or what remains of it.

That poses a hard choice for the Americans. The crisis they face is that the challenges that call for immediate action will not wait for a decision to be made in Washington, London or even at the UN, as the virtual takeover of Saddam City by the mullahs has shown.

US intelligence is now convinced that the uprisings widely predicted by the Americans as their troops marched into Iraq did not happen because Ayatollah Mohammed Bakr al Hakim sent messages from Tehran asking his followers not to take sides during the invasion and withhold support both from Saddam and the Anglo-American forces.

Washington had tried to co-opt the ayatollah into its campaign as early as August last year when he was invited here for a meeting hosted jointly by the state department and the Pentagon.

The ayatollah refused to attend and only sent his representative to the conclave in which other players in post-Saddam Iraq such as Ahmad Chalabi of the Iraqi National Congress and Jلال Talabani of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan participated.

15 APR 2003

## Reconstruction

within the next fortnight to coordinate Indian efforts in the post-war reconstruction of Iraq. Apparently, a lower level Indian functionary has already reached the Iraqi capital to assess the consequences of the military action there. 96-2  
14 In response to a UN emergency appeal for aid to the people of Iraq following the outbreak of military hostilities there, New Delhi had on April 4 announced an assistance package worth \$20 million in cash and kind.

14 APR 2003

INDIAN EXPRESS

D. Astig

# Israel lowers alert against Iraqi threat

**Jerusalem:** Israel on Sunday lowered its state of alert for a possible Iraqi missile strike in retaliation for the US-led war on Iraq, telling Israelis they could stow their gas masks and dismantle sealed rooms.

Israel had feared it could be targeted as it was in the US-led 1991 Gulf War when Iraq fired 39 Scud missiles at the Jewish state.

But Israelis had largely ignored the call to carry their army-issued gas mask kits to work and school during the state of alert, apparently trusting the analysis of military commentators who said the probability of an Iraqi strike was extremely low.

Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz lowered the alert due to the presence of US troops at potential missile launch sites in western Iraq, his ministry said in a statement.

"Due to the fact that coalition (US and British) forces have scoured these

sites, and on the assessment of military intelligence that the threat against Israel has been lifted...the general population is no longer obligated to carry gas masks or maintain sealed rooms," the ministry said.

The ministry said it would free reserve units called in for duty just before the start of the war on March 20, but would keep Israel's Arrow anti-missile batteries in place until further notice.

Mr Mofaz, who tried to set a personal example by being photographed with his gas mask kit in recent days, had been criticised for maintaining the costly state of alert well after Baghdad fell to US troops last week.

Israeli commentators noted the orders to take the masks out of their plastic wrappers and attach their filters would hasten their expiry date and force the army to replace the equipment at a high cost to the already ailing economy. Reuters

14 APR 2003

THE TELEGRAPH

# America to police Iraq

■ 1,200 cops, officers will enforce order ■ Saddam's science adviser gives up



**ANARCHY REIGNS:** An Iraqi shopkeeper gestures at looters in front of a burning building in central Baghdad's al-Rashid Street on Saturday. — AFP (More Iraq War reports on page 12)

## ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, April 12. — As looting persisted today across Iraq, US officials said they will send 1,200 police and judicial officers to help restore order. US commanders also indicated the last major military challenge, that of taking President Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit, may be easier than expected thanks to desertions and bombing. In other developments, the No. 1 Iraqi wanted for questioning about the chemical weapons programme surrendered to US authorities, while Kurdish fighters began withdrawing from oil-rich Kirkuk.

Troops remained focussed today on erasing military threats instead of curbing lawlessness. In Baghdad, US Marines showed reporters a cache of about 50 explosives-laden suicide bomb vests in an elementary school less than 20 feet from the nearest

## UN staff set to return

AMMAN, April 12. — The UN Humanitarian Coordinator For Iraq announced here that a group of international UN staff will return to northern Iraq on Monday. But the UNHCR chief, Mr Ramiro Lopes da Silva, warned the US and British coalition must first assume their responsibilities under the Geneva Convention and restore law and order in Iraq in exchange for the full return of UN staff there.

Next week, a special adviser to UN Secretary-General Mr Kofi Annan will be briefed by the Bush Administration on its plans for post-war Iraq. — AFP/AP

■ Editorial: IMAGES OF WAR, page 8

home. At a nearby junior school, seven classrooms were filled with crates of grenade-launchers, surface-to-air missiles and ammunition. Residents said Iraqi soldiers and militia had positioned weaponry across the neighbourhood before US forces moved in.

Mr Hussein's science adviser sur-

rendered to US military authorities today, insisting that Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction and the US-led attack was unjustified. Lt-Gen. Amir al-Saadi was the senior weapons adviser to the Iraqi President and oversaw the chemical programme in the past. He is believed to have in-depth knowledge of other weapons programmes as well.

Searching for weapons, and for holdout bands of pro-Saddam fighters, has been the primary task of coalition troops in Baghdad. But US officials, criticised for doing too little to curtail looting, say law-and-order

will now become a higher priority.

As looting spread to new areas of Baghdad, Marines agreed to joint patrols with Iraqis. Hundreds of Iraqis also volunteered to help restore order in the city after the

■ See IRAQ, page 12



HC-15 13/4 2/18/03

# Secret team hunts banned arsenal

Baghdad, April 12

BRITAIN AND the US have bypassed the United Nations to deploy a secret team of inspectors to resume the search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

It is a sign of the desperation in London and Washington to find a "smoking gun" to justify the war that the Anglo-American team has already conducted three inspections in the past two weeks. No banned weapons have so far been found.

The decision to set up a new group of inspectors, dubbed US-movic because they are an American-led rival to Unmovic, will infuriate the UN.

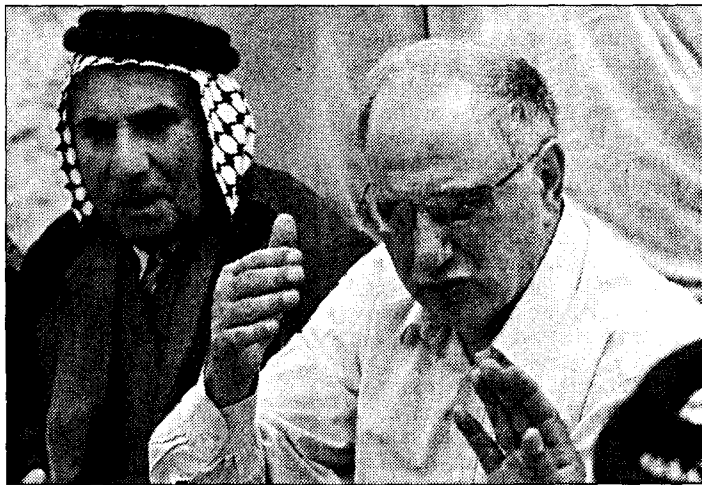
Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General, pointedly reminded Britain and the US this week that Unmovic still has a mandate to carry out inspections.

On Friday, chief weapons inspector Hans Blix added his criticism by saying that war against Iraq was a foregone conclusion months before the first shot was fired. In a scathing attack on Britain and the US, Blix accused them of planning the war "well in advance" and of "fabricating" evidence against Iraq to justify their campaign.

Blix told the Spanish daily *El Pais*: "There is evidence that this war was planned well in advance. Sometimes this raises doubts about their attitude to the [weapons] inspections."

He said Iraq was paying "a very high price in terms of human lives and the destruction of a country" when the threat of banned weapons could have been contained by UN inspections.

The role played by the new in-



Ahmed Chalabi (right), who heads the Iraqi National Congress, with tribal leaders at the US camp near Nasiriyah.

AFP

spectors, who set up a base in Kuwait a week before the war began, was disclosed to the *Guardian* by David Kay, the former head of Unscm, the arms inspections team which left Iraq in 1998 after Iraq accused it of being infiltrated by spies.

No mention has been made of the new group by ministers or military spokesmen, who have indicated that weapons inspections are carried out by military forces. But the group, headed by Charles Duelfer, a former deputy head of the Unscm weapons inspectors, has travelled extensively in Iraq.

It is understood that Duelfer's team was called in to inspect weapons and papers found at an airbase in Iraq's western desert two weeks ago. In the past week it has made two separate visits to sites on the road between Kuwait and Baghdad.

The failure to find any weapons of mass destruction after three weeks of war has raised questions about the *casus belli*. But British intelligence officials said it might be months before evidence was uncovered.

A Cabinet Minister said Saddam's failure to use chemical weapons was not an indication of their absence. They had been dismantled and hidden around the country. "The regime has not had time to reassemble the things," a British official said.

"You will not find a missile factory," a source said. "They would have been broken down."

Paul Rogers, professor of peace studies at Bradford University, said the existence of the secret team would lead to a dispute. "If this team finds a smoking gun, people will not believe it."

The Guardian

13 APR 2003

# Allies, Iraqis begin battle for Baghdad

● US fears Saddam's forces may use chemical weapons

● Najaf residents extend warm welcome to 'invaders'

**Camp Doha:** The battle for Baghdad got under way on Wednesday as American ground forces entered the "red zone".

US army and marine ground forces advanced on separate axes into the swath of territory around Baghdad that is defended by the Republican Guards and has been characterized by American commanders as the most strategically vital and treacherous of the war.

Although still 50 miles or more from the capital, the attack brought the US military one step closer to its ultimate objective: capturing Baghdad and toppling the government of President Saddam Hussein.

This phase of the war is what American commanders call a deliberate attack, which means that unless the government suddenly collapses, an unlikely situation, the army and marine assault will not be a blitz to the outskirts of Baghdad but a methodical effort to destroy, piece by piece, the Republican Guard units defending the capital.

It also ushered in a period of heightened risk for American forces. If the Iraqis plan to unleash chemical weapons, the entry of US forces into the "red zone"—the area within artillery and missile range of Republican Guards defending Baghdad—is expected to be the trigger, according to American commanders.

The Iraqis are defending the area with extended-range Frog rockets, artillery and surface-to-surface missiles that can carry chemical weapons.

Last week, Iraqi officials had charged that American and British forces intended to use poison gas. The assertion was seen as an Iraqi effort to put out a possible cover story so that the government would have the option to use poison gas and blame it on the US and Britain.

To try to persuade the Iraqis not to use poison gas, the US military has begun radio broadcasts telling soldiers who follow any order to use weapons of mass destruction that they will be held accountable. The broadcasts also offer an assurance that American and British forces have no intention to use chemical or biological weapons.

The attack into the area south of Baghdad involved the army's Third Infantry Division and the First Marine Division. During the attack, some American units crossed the Tigris. American military commanders planned to knock out some bridges to isolate some of the Iraqi forces.

One main target was the Medina Division, a Republican Guard unit that escaped destruction in the 1991 war and has, American military officials believe,

been battered by American warplanes to the point of being "combat ineffective".

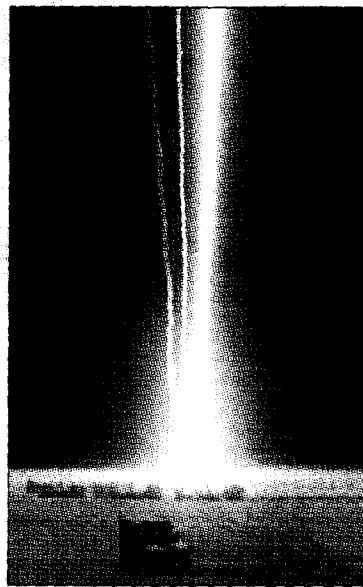
Another opponent in the synchronized attack was the Baghdad Division, a Republican Guard infantry unit that is stationed along the southeast approach to the capital at Kut, about 100 miles from Baghdad. It, too, has been assessed to be on the verge of collapse, but it has been reinforced by regular army units.

American troops also moved into some of the southern cities, including Najaf, where they received a warm welcome on Wednesday, Nasiriya and Samawa.

To mount the attack on Baghdad, the US military has been moving fuel and vast stores of food, ammunition and spare parts north. Airstrips have been built in the desert for C-130 supply planes. The US military has also taken over the Iraqi airbase at Tallil to refuel the air force's A-10 attack planes.

Seeking to disrupt the logistical push, the Iraqis on Wednesday fired an Al Samoud surface-to-surface missile at the Americans. An anti-missile battery fired a Patriot interceptor and knocked down the Iraqi missile over Bushmaster, an assembly area in Iraq for army forces. Debris rained down on a commander from the 82nd Airborne Division. NYT News Service

DAY 14



The US Army's 3rd infantry division launches missiles targeting the Republican Guard in Karbala on Wednesday.

W. Asia

# For Arabs, new jihad is in Iraq

By Neil MacFarquhar (11-9)

**Damascus:** Adil Omar Abu Shinaf, a 30-year-old Libyan in a flowing khaki robe, strode into a battered phone booth near one of this city's main bus terminals and called his home in the coastal hamlet of Barak. "I am going for jihad in Iraq," he told his father.

Recounting the call, Mr Shinaf said while his father wished him luck, his mother, weeping, chastised him for not telling anyone of his plans before leaving Libya. Mr Shinaf, a labourer, is one of the hundreds of men from across the Arab world hoping to reach Baghdad in one of the free buses provided by the Iraqi interests section.

"The Prophet Mohammad warned that there will be no Judgment Day until the Muslims fight with the Jews," he says, enumerating the reasons for his odyssey. "We see no difference between the Americans and the Jews, and God willing, we Arabs can settle all our accounts with the Americans and the British. Damn America."

A combination of religious zeal and Arab nationalism, along with the outrage and horror at the daily scenes of civilian carnage broadcast from Iraq, drives the volunteers.

But many Arab governments, still reeling from the bloodshed fomented

at home by the veterans of the Afghan war, especially those who ended up under the tutelage of Osama bin Laden, seek to bar the route. The notable exception is the government of Saddam Hussein.

"Iraq seeks these volunteers in order to make it a pan-Arab war and eventually a pan-Islamic war. It wants to change it from an Iraqi war against America and its allies into an Islamic war," said Haitham Kailani, a retired Syrian diplomat and former general.

The attempt not only deflects attention from Mr Hussein's own record, but also pressures Arab governments like Jordan and Egypt, which are allied with Washington, because their irate populations demand a policy shift. Not a day goes by without some exhortation from Baghdad for the faithful to join the fray.

In one of the strongest such statements, a letter attributed to Mr Hussein was read on Iraqi TV on Wednesday declaring that jihad was a duty when any Islamic nation was attacked and heaven was the sure reward for death.

It is difficult to ascertain from the volunteers which ones might seek such a role. If the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is any guide, those who boast about it rarely prove to be the ones who blow themselves up.

In Saudi Arabia, the state-controlled religious establishment has discouraged the faithful from heading for Iraq. But on Internet, militant Muslim scholars urge them to join the fight.

Until recently, the Iraqi government was doggedly secular, reviled by Muslim fundamentalists for its executions of religious scholars who dissented from Mr Hussein's rule. But now some volunteers laud Mr Hussein. "He's not a dictator. Among the Arab leaders, he is the only one who has stood up to the US," said a young Jordanian.

Besides, not all volunteers are Arabs. One Canadian Muslim showed up brandishing a sword inscribed "God is Great". There are a smattering of Europeans too, most of them middle-aged men with a family back home. "The US says it wants to protect the Iraqis while actually attacking them," said a 23-year-old Jordanian who dropped out of college to go to Iraq just weeks before his graduation.

But most volunteers are not sure how they will get to Baghdad or what they will do once they get there.

Besides, the road to Baghdad is considered too dangerous. But the volunteers say they will not be deterred. "I will stay there until the last infidel leaves the land of Iraq," said Mr Shinaf. NYT News Service

11-9-2003

THE TELEPHONE

# Army fire ricochets on American plans

## ● Jittery soldiers use cannon fire to kill 10 civilians

By Chidanand Rajghatta  
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Washington:** The US campaign to win the hearts and minds of Iraqis is in tatters after the hideous massacre at a military checkpoint of ten Iraqi civilians, mostly women and children, by the US army.

The only first-hand report from a correspondent embedded with the US army's 3rd Infantry Division described horrific scenes on Monday of US Bradleys using 25mm cannon fire to pulverize a Toyota van that was coming toward a checkpoint without stopping. Cut to pieces by the firing were five children who appeared below the age of five.

American soldiers involved in the massacre belonged to the Division's Bravo Company. According to *Washington Post* reporter William Branigin, who is embedded with the division, the order to fire was given by a Capt Ronny Johnson after he spotted the unidentified four-wheel-drive vehicle "come barreling toward an intersection held by US troops".

From his position at the intersection, he was heard radioing to one of his forward platoons of M2 Bradley Fighting Vehicles to alert it to what he described as a potential threat, Mr Branigan wrote. "Fire a warning shot," Capt Johnson ordered as the vehicle kept coming. Then, with increasing urgency, he told the platoon to shoot a 7.62mm machine-gun round into its radiator. "Stop messing around!" he yelled into the company radio network when he still saw no action being taken.

Finally, he shouted at the top of his voice, "Stop him, Red 1, stop him!" The order was immediately followed by the loud reports of 25mm cannon fire from one or more of the platoon's Bradleys. About half-a-dozen shots were heard in all.

Capt Johnson then yelled, "Cease fire!" and as he peered into his binoculars, he roared at the platoon leader, "You just (expletive) killed a family because you didn't fire a warning shot soon enough!" But the platoon leader maintained that he

### THE BATTLEFRONT DAY 13

- Saddam's main presidential palace, Olympic training centre in Baghdad bombed
- Saddam's office denies Pentagon's claims that his family members were trying to flee Iraq
- British forces attack outskirts of Basra, wait for reinforcements for final push
- Truck rams into British embassy in Teheran. Driver dies. Iran says it was an accident

had fired two warning shots despite which the vehicle had failed to stop.

The explanation was by and large accepted by US officials, who later apologised for the incident but maintained that the soldiers were edgy following the suicide bombing a couple of days earlier.

One soldier was quoted as saying, "It was the most horrible thing I've ever seen, and I hope I never see it again." He said one of the wounded women sat in the vehicle holding the mangled bodies of two of her children. "She didn't want to get out of the car."

Officials who briefed journalists at Centcom were less repentant, coldly putting it down to circumstances and suggesting that such civilian casualties were inevitable in a war. The Pentagon issued a statement saying the vehicle was fired on after the driver ignored shouted orders and warning shots. The shooting, it said, was under investigation. A battalion commander on the spot is said to have given permission for three of the survivors to return to the vehicle and recover the bodies of their loved ones. Medics gave the group 10 body bags and an unspecified amount of money to compensate them, reports said.

THE TELEGRAPH

2 APR 2003