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VOL XXX NO. 4 (GGDN 024)

SATURDAY, 24th MARCH 2007

200 Fils/2 Riyals

Investors may sue Bahrain woman...
 3

LEISURE EXTRA

8-10



Was Houdini poisoned?
 24
brother divorced



Woolmer strangled
 46-47



SEIZED!

Iran arrests 15 British sailors

British soldiers patrol the waterway near Basra where the sailors were seized

BASRA: Iranian forces seized 15 British servicemen yesterday, threatening a full-blown crisis in already tense relations between the West and Tehran.

“British charge d’affaires Kate Smith was summoned to the foreign ministry to receive a firm

Oil prices soar – 29
 protest from Iran against the illegal entry of British sailors into Iranian territorial waters,” its foreign ministry said.

Britain said two boatloads of eight sailors and seven Marines from the naval frigate *Cornwall* had searched a merchant vessel in Iraqi waters on a UN approved mission when Iranian gunboats encircled

and captured them. Britain summoned Iran’s ambassador Rasoul Movahedian in London and protested through its embassy in Tehran.

Washington backed its ally. “We support the British demand for the safe return of their people and equipment,” the State Department said.

It mirrored a similar event in 2004 when Iran seized eight British servicemen.

Nejad cancels UN visit in visa row

TEHRAN: Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad will not go to New York for today’s UN Security Council meeting on Tehran’s nuclear programme because the US was late in issuing him a visa, an official said.

“The US deliberately issued the visas late to prevent the president from going, and they are responsible. Also the visas for the team members who would have accompanied him were not issued.”

Ahmadinejad had said he wanted to attend the meeting at which a vote is expected on a new resolution strengthening sanctions against Iran.

Sunni leader hurt in blasts

BAGHDAD: Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Salam Al Zubayi last night underwent surgery after being injured in a two-bomb assassination bid near his Baghdad home that killed nine people, including his brother.

One of the prominent Sunni leader’s brothers, an adviser, at least two guards and the imam leading the prayers were

among the dead when the explosions ripped through Zubayi’s home, office and mosque compound, an Iraqi security official said.

The Islamic State of Iraq – which groups Al Qaeda in Iraq and several other Sunni extremist groups claimed responsibility for the attack, which was condemned last night by the US.

Bush to veto Iraq bill

WASHINGTON: US President George W Bush early today vowed to veto legislation linking funds for the Iraq war to a timeline for withdrawing US combat troops by August 31 next year.

In a mostly partisan 218-212 vote, House Democrats succeeded in attaching the deadline to legislation authorising more than \$124 billion (BD47bn) in emergency funds. The vote was a significant victory for Democratic Speaker Nancy Pelosi and her party who have vowed to end the unpopular Iraq war.

The world this morning
 2AM LATEST BREAKING NEWS

Boats damaged

MANAMA: More than 80 per cent of boats in Muharraq were damaged by the freak storm that wreaked havoc across Bahrain. About 60 boats, worth at least BD4,000 each, were not tied to the dock when the storm started, sources told our sister paper *Akhbar Al Khaleej* last night. Storm force winds on Thursday shattered windows in homes, offices and shops, tearing down trees and hoardings and knocking out electricity supplies in some areas.

Youngsters chased away

MANAMA: Riot police chased away a group of youngsters who burned tyres and garbage bins in Sehla last night, reports

MANDEEP SINGH: More than 50 police vehicles rushed to the area after the youngsters gathered near the Jidhafs mosque and started their arson spree. The area was sealed off and shops downed shutters.

Blast horror

MAPUTO: Mozambique last night declared three days of national mourning after an explosion at an arms depot in the capital killed more than 100 people and injured hundreds more, many of them children. Exploding bombs, mines and rounds of ammunition set off others around them in the country’s largest arms depot, in a series of blasts that could be heard around the city.

TB cases on the rise

MANAMA: Thirty-nine Bahrainis were among the 158 TB patients admitted to Salmaniya Medical Complex last year, medical sources told our sister paper *Akhbar Al Khaleej* yesterday. The disease is reportedly spreading in many areas with 42 cases reported in Manama, 18 in Riffa and 12 in Muharraq.

Jet crashes amid fighting

MOGADISHU: A plane carrying 11 people helping African peacekeepers in Mogadishu burst into flames and crashed yesterday during a third day of fighting in an insurgency many fear could plunge Somalia back into civil war. Local private radio *Shabelle* said the plane, a Russian-made Ilyushin used in the region to transport both cargo and troops, was hit by a missile as it took off from Mogadishu.

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