INTERNATIONAL

intelligence on Iraq'

AFP, London

Two foreign intelligence services, thought to be those of France and Italy, supplied Britain with the claim that Saddam Hussein's Iraq had sought uranium from Africa, the Financial Times newspaper reported Monday.

Britain made the uranium claim in a dossier last September despite being told the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had

"reservations" about its inclusion. The paper said its information came from senior Whitehall

US administration officials have criticised the inclusion of a reference to the nuclear claim in President George W. Bush's January 28 State of the Union Address and the nation, and pointed out that it had not been corroborated by Washington's intelligence network.

Top JI bomber

Philippines jail

Southeast Asia's war on terrorism.

the national police headquarters

with two Filipino guerrillas from the

operatives of JI ever to be caught by

Al-Ghozi is one of the most senior

His escape embarrassed and

angered Philippines President Gloria

Arroyo as she hosted Australian

Prime Minister John Howard to

discuss anti-terror initiatives earlier

THE KOREA HERALD/ANN, Seoul

A recent series of media reports indicates that North Korea will

imminently emerge as a nuclear

article earlier this month which said

American satellites had identified an

advanced nuclear testing site in an

area called Yongdeokdong where

North Koreans are developing tech-

nology to make nuclear warheads

small enough to fit atop their mis-

Japan -- and naturally US troops

stationed in the country -- at risk, the newspaper reported, quoting

CIA sources.

The small nuclear weapons put

In Seoul last week, Ko Young-

koo, director of the National

Intelligence Service, told National

Assemblymen that North Korea is

known to have carried out high

explosive tests 70 times at Yongdeokdong, near Yongbyon,

since 1994. The conventional high

explosive tests can be linked to

nuclear weapons development as

its detonation can set off the explo-

sion of a plutonium device.

They included a New York Times

Prudence in

N Korea

watching

Abu Sayyaf network, police said.

Asian law enforcement agencies.

escapes from

AFP, Manila

'European govts provided Delhi won't send troops to Iraq

US Senate okays bill to cut aid to India

The Indian government Monday announced it will not send troops to Iraq to join a stabilisation force, ending months of dithering on the politically-explosive issue. The decision came after two

hours of deliberations within the security cabinet headed by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. The security cabinet suggested

that troops could be deployed should the United Nations endorse such a force, Foreign Minister Yashwant Sinha said.

"Were there to be an explicit UN mandate for the purpose, the government of India could consider the deployment of our troops in Iraq," Sinha told reporters after the cabinet meeting ended.

"The government of India has given careful thought to the question of sending Indian troops to

"India remains ready to respond to the urgent needs of the

Iragi people for their stability, security, political progress and economic reconstruction," he said.

Vajpayee's cabinet, however, cided to contribute to the reconstruction of the war-wrecked

"The government of India is ready to consider contributing to the reconstruction of infrastructure in Iraq... and other needs of the Iraqi people," Sinha said, reading out a statement.

The decision ends India's vacillation over a US request to send about 17,000 troops to join a stabilisation force in Iraq, where American soldiers are now under random attacks.

Though some of the prime minister's top aides had supported the US request, Vajpayee faced resistance from the opposition and members of his BJP-led coalition government, who argued that Indian troops must work only under the UN flag, not a US-British

IANS adds: The US Senate has unanimously backed a proposal to cut foreign aid to India and some other countries that owe New York city back payment of property taxes on their consulates or mis-

The bill, sponsored by Sen. Charles Schumer, a Democrat from New York, is expected to move quickly through the House of Representatives to cut foreign aid by 110 per cent of the amount owed and leave the remaining funding

The legislation comes in the wake of a lawsuit filed three months ago by the city against four foreign governments that owe over \$100 million in property taxes. The countries that reportedly owe taxes are India, Mongolia, Turkey, and the Philippines.

These nations contend they need not pay the taxes because of diplomatic immunity.

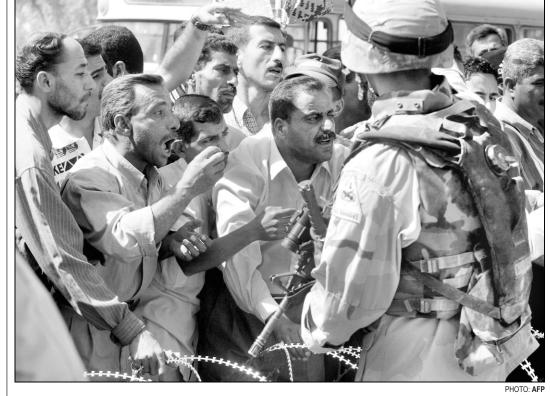
New York city alleges that these

portions of their properties to staff members or private businesses. The Philippines, for example, leased space to Philippines Airlines, a bank and a restaurant. According to city law, that makes their property taxable.

The money these countries owe is huge. Turkey owes nearly \$70 million in property taxes and interest dating back to the 1980s, according to a report in Newsday, a daily published from New York

"New York city is still recovering from terrorist attacks, and we need every single tax dollar we are owed," Schumer said. "It's amazing how many of these consulates flout the law. Just because you work in the land of the free doesn't mean you get a free pass," he said.

As part of the city's tax exemption rules, consulates are required to file forms allowing the city to inspect their property in search of violations, but Schumer said some countries don't return the form.



Iraqi soldiers of former president Saddam Hussein argue with US soldiers on Monday during a protest demanding payment of their first salaries in four months at a former Baghdad airport. Some 300 soldiers and officers took part in the tense stand off.

Indian schoolboys make their way along a flooded street in Kolkata on Monday. The monsoon rain has flooded large areas in the north Indian state of Assam and flashed major connecting hill tracks of the north West Bengal districts.

Floods wash away schools, homes in Assam

AFP, Bahbor

t was school teacher Trilochan Pegu's worst nightmare -- to see the school building he used to teach in being swept away by surging floodwaters.

"I couldn't do anything to save my school from being washed away. Now where do we start our lessons once the summer vacation ends next month?" said 50-yearold Pegu wearily.

"I feel like crying thinking about the 50 students who study in my

The bamboo-and-thatch school was among hundreds of huts in the village of Bahbor which were swept away by the swirling waters of the mighty Brahmaputra river.

Bahbor is 80 km north of Guwahati, capital of India's north-eastern state of Assam, which has been bearing the brunt of monsoon flooding in India, with more than three million people displaced and 73 killed since it began

"Can you see our school roof?" asked seven-year-old student Rabi

19 killed as

heavy rains

lash Gujarat

Heavy rains in Gujarat have killed

19 people so far with five deaths

Three of the 19 died of electro-

All the deaths have been

Large areas of the state, includ-

reported from in and around

Bharuch district in central Gujarat.

ing the drought prone areas of Saurashtra and Kutch, have been receiving medium to heavy rains.

Several areas witnessed heavy rains Sunday, bringing life to a

virtual standstill in many cities and

Surat in South Gujarat recorded

The wet conditions are

being reported in the last two days.

IANS, Ahmedabad

cution, said officials.

The thatched roof of the school could be seen stuck in some water hvacinth branches as the gushing water threatening to push it further

10 killed in fresh Kashmir violence

AFP, Srinagar

Five Islamic militants, three Indian security force personnel and two civilians were killed in a fresh spate of separatist-violence in Indian Kashmir, officials said Monday.

Panic gripped the busy Regal Chowk area of the summer capital Srinagar on Monday when suspected rebels opened fire at a security force patrol, killing a policeman and injuring a shopkeeper, police and witnesses said.

The shooting sparked panic in the bustling shopping area, with people seen running for cover fearing retaliation from the police,

In the village of Hapatnar in the northern Kupwara district Muslim rebels Monday ambushed an army patrol killing two soldiers, a police

Army reinforcements rushed to the village and launched a search operation.

Meanwhile, three militants were killed during a night-long clash with border guards in the central Kashmir district of Budgam, said Tirtha Acharya, spokesman for India's Border Security Force (BSF) in Srinagar, the Kashmiri summer capital.

He said all three were top ranking members of the hardline Jaishe-Mohammad, including two

Deputy Prime Minister Lal Krishna

Advani has said the government

will not give in to pressure to enact legislation to build a Hindu temple

on the site of a razed mosque in the

The radical Vishwa Hindu

Parishad (World Hindu Council or VHP) allied to India's ruling Hindu

nationalist BJP party has threat-

ened nationwide protests if the government does not introduce a bill in the upcoming session of

"Why Ayodhya? Any bill cannot

be passed without the support of the opposition Congress Party in the Rajya Sabha (upper house) and

we should accept this harsh reality.

northern Indian town of Ayodhya.

AFP, New Delhi

parliament.

No question of law for

temple-building: Advani

Pakistani nationals, with one of them allegedly working with the

"Three BSF men were injured during the fighting," he added.

Three AK rifles, a radio set and a ohotograph of Osama bin Laden -the main accused in the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States -- were recovered from the bodies of the slain rebels.

Photographs of the world's

most wanted terrorist have been recovered in the past from rebels but officials have yet to establish anv link between his al-Qaeda terrorist network and Muslim rebels fighting Indian rule in

Meanwhile, Indian troops shot dead two more rebels in the neighbouring district of Doda late Sunday during a cordon and search operation, police said.

In south Kashmir district of Anantnag a Muslim forest guard died during a cross-fire between rebels and security force personnel, while a 21-year-old Muslim woman was shot dead by suspected rebels, police said.

More than 38,000 people have died in Indian Kashmir since the eruption of an anti-Indian rebellion in the scenic Himalayan region in 1989. Separatists put the toll twice as high.

"But the same cannot be said

here in the Ayodhya case. Our

associates should understand that

to run the government a certain

amount of pragmatism is neces-

sary. Why is the VHP criticising us?

narrow appeal, neither are we

demolished on December 6, 1992, by thousands of Hindu zealots who

believed it had been built on the site

of a destroyed Hindu temple mark-

ing the birthplace of the warrior god

Muslims want the mosque rebuilt.

abandoning our ideology.

ousands homeless.

"We are not for any kind of

The mosque in Ayodhya was

'Most Britons feel Blair misled them'

AFP, London

Two thirds of British voters feel Prime Minister Tony Blair misled them over the case for launching a war in Iraq, according to a poll in the Daily Mirror newspaper Monday.

Sixty-six percent of those quesioned in the ICM Research poll said the prime minister had misled them -- whether on purpose or not - over the reasons for going to war.

Twenty seven percent said they

believed Blair knowingly misled the British people, while 39 percent said the Prime Minister had misled them, but not knowingly. Over a third, 35 percent, said

that their confidence in Blair had decreased as a result of his handling of the the confrontation with

However the poll also showed that dissatisfaction with Blair's role in the Iraq war does not appear to have seriously dented his ruling Labour Party's chances of winning the next general election.

Costs of Iraq occupation May reach \$ 100b

AFP, Washington

The cost of attacking and occupying Iraq is expected to reach 100 billion dollars by the end of next year, raising concerns that other military needs will go unmet, the Washington Post reported Sunday.

The war already has cost about 50 billion dollars, representing a 14-percent increase in military spending planned for this year, the daily said.

Administration officials concede that spending levels in Iraq are considerably higher than anticipated.

As the war began in March, Dov Zakheim, the Pentagon's chief financial officer, told the Post that post-combat operations were expected to cost about 2.2 billion dollars a month. By early June, he

The demolition led to nationhad adjusted that forecast to three wide riots between Hindus and billion a month, and costs could Muslims, which left at least 2,000 climb even higher, the Post said. people dead and hundreds of A Hindu revivalist campaign began in the mid-1980s to have a temple built at the site, while some

Defence experts worry that the cost of remaining in Iraq could hurt other military needs, such as the proposed transformation of the US military into a smaller, more rapidly deployed force.

In introducing bills we also need the support of all our allies," expected to continue with the weather office predicting heavy rains in the next 36 hours. Advani told journalists from the "Tarun Bharat" newspaper late **US** asks diplomats

AFP, Washington

The United States on Sunday ordered its non-essential diplomats to leave Burundi and warned US citizens there to avoid the country amid increased fighting between government and rebel The State Department also said

Americans already in Burundi should reconsider any plans to stay there as a Hutu rebel group resumed the worst assault on Bujumbura in 10 years of war "to alert the world" to the conflict. "Due to intensified fighting

between government and rebel forces, the Department of State has ordered the departure of nonemergency personnel at the US embassy in Burundi," it said.

"The department recommends that private American citizens in Burundi evaluate their personal security situation in light of the continuing fighting and consider departure while commercial flights remain available," it said.



Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair (R) and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder greet whilst posing for photographers at the Progressive Governance Summit in Berkshire on Sunday. The summit on Sunday night was also attended by 12 other world leaders.

World leaders seek makeover for '3rd way'

REUTERS, London

British Prime Minister Tony Blair and a host of world leaders will on Monday plot the future path of center-left politics in a bid to give the "Third Way" brand of the 1990s a much-needed makeover.

The summit comes as centerleft governments battle growing public disillusionment with their achievements that has already ushered in the Right in some countries and is forcing Third Way leaders still in power to rethink their strategy aimed at marrying the best of capitalism and social-

It also brings together leaders from Western and Eastern Europe and Latin America who clashed over the Iraq war, at a time when politicians and the public are questioning the case made by Britain and America for attacking Baghdad.

Blair, who led his Labour Party to victory in 1997 on the back of the Third Way brand, is himself strugling to secure a route to an historic pird term but is aware his cherished political project is in need of

Iraqi council starts work as WMD fallout dogs Bush **AFP,** Baghdad a full member of the community of

A top bomb-maker and Indonesian An appointed governing council pointman for the Jemaah Islamiyah has started work in Iraq, a land-mark step toward rebuilding the (II) terrorist network escaped from a Philippines prison on Monday, country and preparing the ground for democratic elections as early as police said, dealing a major blow to next year, as US officials sought to Fathur Rohman Al-Ghozi, who is mute the fallout over Saddam serving 17 years for possession of Hussein's reputed arsenal of explosives, escaped from a cell inside banned weapons.

> The milestone meeting Monday of the 25-member council was the first of a national executive body since US-led forces wrenched Saddam's Baath Party regime from power in April and was hailed as a historic day for Iraq.

> "There are defining moments in history and for Iraq today is defi-nitely one of those," UN special representative Sergio Vieira de Mello said.

"Iraq is now back right where it belongs, at peace with itself and as

Delegates representing Iraq's capestry of Shiite, Sunni, Kurdish, Turkmen and Christian communities met in its new headquarters. the former ministry for military

The council's first decision was

to enshrine April 9 -- the day US

tanks rumbled into Baghdad to herald the end of Saddam's rule -as a national holiday, and rescind all those marking Baath Party anniversaries. The meeting coincided with a major operation by US forces to wipe out remnants of the ousted

regime and others blamed for a string of attacks on coalition

The council was to hit the ground running, Iyad Allawi, from the Iraqi National Accord

Britain hailed the creation of the council as a major step on Iraq's road to democracy.

people of Iraq. For the first time in decades Iraq will have an administration broadly representative of Iraq's diverse society," Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said.

a momentous step towards the goal of an Iraq run by Iraqis for

The creation of the council was also a major win for the United Nations and Viera de Mello, whose work helped put the world body in the thick of Iraqi politics.

Movement said, with meetings Monday to discuss council proce-

"This is a pivotal event for the

"The people of Iraq have taken

New bid to heal Arafat-Abbas to leave rift as Sharon meets Blair Burundi

Further efforts were being made Monday to heal a damaging rift between Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and his prime minister Mahmud Abbas Monday as Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon took his campaign to render his arch foe Arafat irrelevant to London.

Ahmed Qorei, the speaker of the Palestinian legislative council (parliament), was due to hold separate meetings here with the two political heavyweights after similar talks Sunday failed to produce a breakthrough, a senior Palestinian official told AFP on

condition of anonymity. "Qorei will today try to resolve the crisis between both leaders," said the source.

"There is clearly a conflict of ower," he added.

Qorei was part of a three-man team which tried unsuccessfully Sunday to end the rift which has been sparked by divisions over

Abbas' handling of peace talks with the Israelis

Sharon has accused Arafat of trying to undermine Abbas, who offered to resign last week from the central committee of Arafat's Fatah Abbas has been criticized in the

central committee for being too

soft towards Israel, with many

infuriated by Sharon's refusal to

countenance the release of more than 350 of some 6,000 Palestinian prisoners in its jails. Arafat invited Abbas to attend a dinner offered in honor of visiting Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov on Sunday night but sources said that Abbas "refused,

because their conflict has not been

resolved.

Sharon was to hold talks in London later Monday with Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair and Foreign Secretary Jack Straw in which he is expected to hammer home his drive to persuade foreign governments to boycott Arafat.

But a senior British official told AFP that London was unlikely to break off all contact with the veteran Palestinian leader.

"We are not maintaining a fullon relationship with Yasser Arafat. It is very much a tactical issue," he said, without giving further details. "We're playing it by ear." "We're always asking ourselves

what is most likely to promote real

progress on the ground and what is

most likely to work against that," he

said. "But it is not a black-andwhite issue. Sharon said in interviews ahead of his departure that governments which maintained contacts with Arafat were effectively undermining efforts to resolve the decades long conflict between the two

"I think there has to be a common approach to remove Arafat from all positions," Sharon told the Norwegian daily Áftenposten in an interview published Sunday.