BDIFF

Saddam scorns Bush's call: Iraq. which has portrayed the Gulf war as an Islamic duty, on Sunday soured scorn on President George Bush's call on Americans to pray for Allied troops in the Gulf, saying it mocked Jod, reports Reuter

To which God does Bush want them to turn in prayer?" Baghdal radio asked . "Who will answer the prayers of evildoers, killers and slavers?"

Bust has proclaimed Sunday a national day of prayers and urged americans to pray for the Allied troops and for peace:

"Bush is adding to his sins and crimes, the crime of mocking Od ... when he claims to know him, turns to him in praye, and asks him to make his evil and infidelity triumph," said a commentary, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corperation from Nicosia.

hran may boycott Haj: A Tehran newspaper said on Sunday Iran and other Muslim countries mar boycott Haj in protest at the presence of the US-led forces in Saudi Arabia, reports Reuter from Nicosia.

"Participation in this year's Haj ceremonies in view of the mussive presence of US troops in Saudi Arabia to massacre Muslims cannot be accepted by Islamic Iran," said Tchran

Iranian officials have condemned what they call bombings

of civilian targets in Iraq by allied aircraft in the Gulf. "In case of the war being prolonged and brutal bombardments of Iraqi residential areas continued by the US-led coalition from Saudi soil. Muslims may stage an all-out ban on Hal ceremonies in protest against the house of Saud(Saudi Royal Family) inviting infidel troops to its sacred land," the paper said in an editorial carried by the national news agency

lraq may use chemical: British Forign Secretary Douglas Hurd warned Sunday that Iraq could be tempted to use chemical weapons because its other miltary options were being ruled out, reports AFP.

"We have had terrorism, we have had Scuds against Israel, we have had Scuds against Riyadh, we have had the oil slick, we have had now also the limited ground attack into Saudi Arabia, the temptation for him to use chemical weapons must be increasing," the minister in London said.

Such an attack was "between likely and probable," he said on the BBC radio four programme: The world this weekend'.

Iran urged to support Iraq: The Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas urged Iran Monday to support Iraq in the Gulf war and backed calls for Jihad (holy war) against the US-led coalition, Reuter from Nicosia

"Hamas approves the call for Jihad against the American forces and their allies by the Muslim brotherhood in Jordan and by the Council of Clerics in Yemen," said a statement from the fundamentalist group, based in Israeli occupied territories.

"Hamas calls upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to support Iraq in this battle against infidel power."

Hamas is competing with the PLO-backed unified leadership of the uprising for control over the three-year Palestinian revolt in the West Bank and Gaza strip.

1 lakh AIDS victims in US: The death toll from AIDS in the United States has topped 100,000, with nearly a third dying just last year, and is escalating. Federal health officials in Atlanta said Thursday.

reports AP. Cut of 161073 AIDS cases reported in this country since June 1981, 100,777 peopl: had died as of the end of December, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) said, citing new statistie

CDC researchers project that, in the next three years, as many as 25,000 more Americans will die of AIDS.

"The endemic is here," said Dr. Ruth Berkelman, chief of the CDC's AIDS Surveillance Branch. "We see from these numbers lone that AIDS has already taken an incredibly heavy toll and there's no letup in sight."

ICRC visits 328 Iraqi POWs: The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said on Sundayit had visited 328 Iraqi prisoners of war to date. reports Reuter.

But its delegates in Baghdad had yet to receive permission to see taptured Allied pilots, whom Iraq said it is using as humar shields to deter air attacks on strategic sites, a spokeman in Geneva said.

Thir detention in combat areas would be a violation of the 1949 Geneva Conventions which say captured soldiers must

be trated humanely and held outside war zones.

The spokesman said, the ICRC visited 326 Iraqis in Saudi Araba and two others detained in Britain as suspected members of their country's armed forces. .

US citizens to leave Jordan: The Uf State departments had urged all US citizens to leave Jodan as soon as possible, reports AP.

Here is the text of the travel advisory: "The outbreak of hostilities in the Persian Gulf region has

ucreased tensions in the area and resulted in a heightened

isk to Americans." "The Department of State advises all private US citizens to

defer all travel to Jordan. The Department of State has ordered the departure of all non-essential personnel and all dependents from Jordan...... Embassy operations are Sizeply curtailed and normal consular operations suspended. The embassy will be able to provide services to US citizens during emergencies." 'American citizens residing in Jordan are advised to de-

part the country as soon as possible."

4 killed in US copter crash: AUS Marine Corps helicopter crashed Sunday in eastern Saudi Arabia, killing all four crew members. US military authorities announced, reports AP.

A statement released by US Defence Department in Washington said initial reports indicated that the crash of the UH-If Huey helicopter was not combat-related, but it provided no other information.

Names of the victims were being withheld until their relatives were notified.

The incident raised to 30 the number of Americans reported killed in Operation Desert Storm, including 18 noncombat deaths, since the Gulf war began Jan 17.

Blast rocks Yemeni embassy: Egypt's Middle East News Agency (MENA) in Nicosia said there was an explosion on Sunday night at the Italian embassy

in Yemen, but there were no casualties, reports Reuter. MENA, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation,

gave no other details. It was the latest attack aimed at embassies of countries considered anti-Iraqi or members of the US-led coalition

waging war against Iraq over its occupation of Kuwait. The explosion came 24 hours after a similar blast near the French embassy, with no reports of anyone hurt.

On Thursday, sticks of dynamite were thrown at the homes of the Japanese and Turkish ambassadors. Gunmen also fired three shots at the American Embassy.

S. Arabian aid to Pakistan: Saudi Arabia is to send urgent aid to Pakistan to alleviate

suffering caused by Friday's earthquake, an official in King Fahd's office in Riyadh said Sunday . reports AFP. The official, quoted by the official Saudi press agency, said

the aid would consist of 10 million dollar pulse, 284 tonnes of medicines, blankets and food would be immediately sent by air to the Pakistani government

According to Pakistani officials, the quake, which measured 6.8 on the open-ended richter scale, killed at least 300 people in the remote Hindu Kush region in the far northwest

of the country. Four casualties were also reported from neighbouring Afghanistan, and the quake also caused damage in the Soviet Union.

Saddam still a formidable enemy, says US official

Patriot

in mid-air

US firm to keep casualties low

tary sources and Pentagon of-

ficials say. As of Sunday, the

Pentagon reported 12 Ameri-

cans killed in action, 26 miss-

ing in action and eight prison-

aware of Iraqi President Sad-

dam Hussein's tactic of trying

to entice the allies into a

ground war — the type of

fighting soldiers liken to "a

at the heart of the plan that

sent night-time air raids

blasting over Baghdad in the

first hours of the air war and

remains a top priority for mili-

tary commanders, the Pentagon

warning. Bush was told to ex-

peot almost five times as many

aircraft losses in the initial

phase of the war as have been

recorded. Pentagon sources

designed to try to keep losses

to a minimum and so far has

A Soviet military officer said

on Saturday that Iraq had to

use much of its missile poten-

As a worst-case scenario

But the air campaign was

The President's order was

The Pentagon is well

ers of war.

meat grinder."

official said

been successful.

Warhead packed with

shrapnel shatters Scud

tial and that western countries

had helped Baghdad develop

Mikhailkin told a television in-

terviewer that wide -scale use

of missiles by both sides could

cause mass destruction in the

that Iraqi Scud missiles di

rected at Saudi Arabia and Is-

rael were Soviet-produced

saying they had long been

Union began producing Scud

missiles with a 200 mile

(300km) range in the 1960s

and "like other countries" sold

assistance of firms from Ger-

many and Italy modernised

this system and extended its

range to 375 to 550 miles

and El-Hussein. This is a new

system and the attempts of

some western media to impli-

of missiles from both sides is

"It said now called EL-Abbas

"My assessment of the use

(650-900- km)," he said.

cate us are groundless."

"As we know Iraq with the

the weapon abroad.

Mikhalkin said, the Sovict

modified with western help.

He played down accusations

Artillery Marshall Vladimir

its Scud missiles,

WASHINGTON, Feb 4: Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein remains a formidable enemy despite heavy Allied bombing, US officials said on Sunday, as the military reported more aircraft losses and confirmed the deaths of seven Marines by Allied fire, reports Reuter.

The Chairman of the House of Representatives Armed Services Committee Les Aspin, warned against political pressures that he said could push the Allied forces into a premature ground assault.

Aspin said in a television interview that the air war could go on indefinitely but a ground battle was probably incvitable.

Defence Secretary Dick Chency in a separate television interview, said "we think we're making significant progress in terms of the air campaign

Scud

Approaches

6,000 miles

per hour

target at up to

Scud/Al-Hussein

 $\star \star$

Range: 350 mls/600 km

WASHINGTON, Feb 4: The

first bloody hours of ground

combat in the Gulf War killed

11 Marines, bringing home the

cost of war with crushing real-

ity. But day after day, thou-

sands of warplanes drop their

bombs on Iraq, with a relative

few airmen missing or taken

tween air warfare and ground

warfare, and the Pentagon is

determined to keep American

escalate dramatically as fight-

ing transfers from single-seat

jets to thousand-man battal-

ions. Pentagon planners are

following instructions handed

down from President George

began months ago. "one of the

criteria the president gave us

was to keep casualties on both

sides as low as possible," said a

senior Pentagon official, who

spoke on condition of

the 41,000 mark, the Pentagon

leadership is "jubilant" the

losses have been so low, mili-

Salvadorean

peace talk

ends

mediated peace talks between

Leftist Salvadorean rebels and

the Government ended on

Sunday and a rebel source said

a deadlock of many month had

"We're making progress",

said a member of the Farbundo

Marti National Liberation Front

(FMLN) who spoke on condi-

tion of anonymity at the hotel

where the two-day talks were

broken a deadlock that has

obstructed the talks since last

year, but he declined to give

details . The United Nations

the negotiations secret.

has ordered both sides to keep

He said the two sides had

been broken, reports Reuter.

MEXICO CITY, Feb 4: UN

And as allied flights top

As planning for the war

That's the difference be-

Knowing that losses can

prisoner, reports AP.

deaths to a minimum.

Bush himself.

anonymity.

The missile war

against his (Saddam) ground forces inside Kuwait and that area of southern Irag".

He added, on the battlefield, at this point, (he is) still formidable -- although I think, as I say, I think our forces have done very well".

Chency said the heart of the military operation remained aimed at forcing Iraq to leave Kuwait, the neighbouring Emirate it overran on August 2. Aspin, a Wisconsin

Democrat, warned against rushing into a land campaign. The air war is our war, he said, while a land war would be

lrag's. I think there's a very strong feeling in Congress that really what we ought to do is take our time and make sure that we have done whatever we need to do with the air war be fore starting the ground war,

There is political pressure for a land assault starting to come from information abroad that says that Saddam Hussein is winning here by the fact that he's able to withstand all this pounding Aspin said.

"..... He's winning by the fact that he isn't losing as this air war goes on," Aspin said. "That's going to create pressure to move on the ground war and get this thing over, and I think it would be a mis-

Although there has been no word from the US Administration on when a ground war would begin, the Los Angeles Times reported on Sunday that US officials have concluded a ground offensive could start when half of Iraq's vehicles and equipment have

Patriot

Approaches incoming missile

Patriot

Range: 50 mls/80 km

that if there is large-scale use,

both sides could sustain great

potential is not exhausted and

they till have the necessary

number of missiles to carry on

Iraq's main arms supplier, has

denounced Baghdad's invasion

of Kuwait and supports the US-

led military campaign to force

President Saddam Hussein to

commit troops and has ex-

pressed concern in recent

days that allied forces could go

beyond the mandate of the U.N

Security Council resolution and

inflict inordinate damage on

Russia near the border with

Georgia, about 4,000 people

attended a rally denouncing

Chairman of the Islamic

Democratic Party of Dagestan,

which organised the rally, said

speakers denounced the

United States, Soviet Union

and Israel as aggressors.

In Daegestan, in Southern

Abdrashid Saidov, Deputy

But Moscow has refused to

The Soviet Union, long

"I think that Irag's missile

damage," Mikhalkin said.

military action."

withdraw his forces.

the war.

guided by own sensors and

ground-based radar

been destroyed, that could be in 10 to 20 days.

Major-General Robert Johnston of the US central command told a briefing in Riyadh that the deaths of seven US Marines inside an armoured vehicle on Tuesday were because of a missile accidentally fired by their own

A B-52 involved in air raids against Iraqi troops crashed into the Indian ocean, the Defence Department said. Three of its six erew members were rescued and the US command in Saudi Arabia said it appeared mechanical problems caused the crash.

The US military also reported the loss of a Marine helicopter in Saudi Arabia, apparently not combat-related, with two deaths

Hotel belies grim Cambodian situation

Off the Record

Chickens to die sc

that men may live a

against chemical attack for many allied troops on the Gulf war

front is a feathered one, reports Reuter.

cam alarm outside the medical tent.

the tent city where the soldiers sleep.

Their mission; to die so that man may live .

by lragt forces with poison gas.

tem against poison gas.

agents and mustard gas.

A. U. S. BASE (Saudt Arabta): The secont I line of defence

Chickens are dotted around areas that it sight be attacked

Like canaries and other small birds kept down coal mines

US and other allied forces have high _ technology equip-

The chickens are a back-up, troops say, to confirm the

At this forward base, a chicken called Founway sits next to a

The base's command chicken is cal'ted Buford Chicken

Some people on the base say they are looking forward to a

Walter guards the gate, and Chicken Studdam is deep inside

southern-style cookout with plenty of barbecued chicken

when the war is over, if the chicken live; to die another day,

ment such as cam-chemical agent monitor - to detect nerve

presence of lethal agents after an electronic alarm has

sounded. That gives troops time to don protective masks and

in the 19th century, the chickens act as an rearly warning sys-

They die before gas builds to levels deadly to humans.

PHNOM PENH: The newly-weds, becaming with happiness, pose for the photographer in front of the modern hotel - just about the only sing in Phnom Penh that a better future might await war-torn and impoverished Cam bodia, reports Reuter.

The Hotel Cambodian, brightly lit, by its own generators when most of the capital goes dark at night, is filled with well-trained, well-groomed staff in a city where any type of dirty job is a Godsend.

Spotlessly clean in a sea of grin ie, the hotel is for most Cambodians their only glimpse of a world removed from civil

"Many perents in Phnom Penh are willing to have their sons work here even for free," said Om Sukal, 52 a wedding

"I very much admire the hotel management team who have very sharp eyes for recruits and train the young Cambodians from knowing nothing to be well disciplined and work up to standard," said Kaew Bun, a state brink official.

Two years ago people in our country did not even know what an elevator looked like," he acided.

No nightclub room sealed against gas

TEL AVIV: The sign on the door of the "Desert" night club reads: "Enter at your own risk, no room sealed against gas." But the place is so packed that would-be revelers are being

turned away, reports AFP. At the bar Aviv Sheri, a 28-year-old entrepreneur, sips his beer and chain smokes.

"I feel good here," he says. "It's way my of sticking my fingers up to Saddam Hussein.

The Iraqi President has made Tel Aviv his favourite missile target, killing two people here, injuring scores and razing their homes since the Gulf war began January 17.

I am showing him that these Scuds will not change my habits," Mr. Shert added. "Saddam hasn't got much time left to rule Iraq, but I'll still

be propping up this bar," he laughs. A waiter wades through the dense crowd with his tray.

"You can't hear the air raid sirens," he shouts. "The music is too loud." I'm likely to leave here one of these mornings and find my

town half destroyed by bombs, without having heard a thing, he adds

A Sikkimese touch in State Deptt

NEW YORK: The 22-year-old daughter of the last King of Sikkim is to marry a US State Department official, the New York Times reported Sunday. Says AFP.

Princess Hope Leezum Namgyal and Thomas Reich 34 are expected to live in Okinawa when Mr. Reich becomes the State Department's political-military officer there next year, the Times said.

Sikkim, formerly a Himalayan protectorate of India, became an Indian state when the King. Palden Thidup Namgyal, was deposed in 1975. The King died in 1982. The bride's mother, Hope Cooke,

the former Queen, announced the engagement.

7 marines killed by Allied missiles

RIYADH, Feb 4: Seven US marines died when their armoured vehicle was hit by a missile fired by their own side near the Saudi border with Kuwait, a US military spokesman said Sunday, reports Reuter. The marines were on a re-

connaissance mission on January 29 when they observed Iraqi forces trying to cross the border, Major General Robert Johnston told a daily briefing. During an ensuing clash.

which involved "very intense, very close" combat, the marines' vehicle was hit by a missile, Johnston said. "We have reason to conclude it was a friendly missile. It does appear it was Maverick missile, he added

Johnston who the missile hit the back of the marines LAV (Light Armoured Vehicle). added by an eighth death in side Saudi Arabia may also have been caused by "friendly fire". In that incident, first reported on Saturday, one marine was

bombs dropped on a convoy. Johnston also said Allied

killed and two wounded when

bombers had destroyed at least 99 Iraqi aircraft on the ground, up from a previous total of 31. He said this followed attacks on hardened bunkers at Iraqi airfields and could be a law estimate. He said the United States

and its allies fighting to end

lraq's occupation of Kuwait.

had flown 2,500 missions in

the previous 24 hours. This took the total to more than 41,000 since the war began on January 17. But he said there had been

very little action along the border between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. There has been very little

action along the border. Once in a while a few small arms ." he added. He also said that one of two

Iraqi Scud missiles fired towards Israel early on Sunday "may have landed in Jordan. He gave no further details.

He said a total of 800 lragis had been taken prisoner.

Soviet intelligence helps Allies reduce casualties projected a loss of 70 to 80

Feb 4: WASHINGTON, The Soviet Union has handed over valuable intelligence information that may have helped the allies hold down expected casualties in the air war

with Iraq, a.U.S. military source said Saturday. reports AP.

The senior military source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the United States has been " very pleased" with details the Soviets have provided about

Iraq's arsenal, including its weapons an its air defense system. The Soviets Union was for years Iraq's major military supplier. Details of what the Soviets

turned over to the United States were contained in a story published in Saturday's Philadelphia Inquirer newspaper.

An Air Force general, who was not identified by the paper, said the information has enabled the US and allied fighter pilots to counter

Iraqi air defenses by adjusting electronic counter-measures on the aircraft. Knowing the frequencies of Iraq's air defense radars is like having an extra defense, the general said.

The Soviet -supplied details may be one reason the allies casualty rate is not as high as some had projected. Estimates provided to the House Armed Services

Committee before the Gulf

war started Jan. 16

aircraft a week. assuming 2,000 sorties a day Over a two -or three-week

campaign, casualties from an air campaign would total about 1,800 including 300 fatalities, a committee report said. So far, 22 allied planes have

in S. Arabia - AFP photo

been lost, 18 of them in combat. The allies have averaged 2,000 sorties on many days. Twenty -seven allied troops have been listed as missing in action ,

including 14 Americans, ten Britons, two Italians and one Kuwaiti.

Mark Kramer, a specialist on Soviet military affairs at Harvard University, said in a phone interview that Defense Secretary Dick Chency asked the Soviets to give him information about Soviet weapons when he visited Moscow last fall.

I know that is the kind of information the United States wanted to get, " he

Morcove, Kramer said the Soviets could turn over information about Iraq without exposing military secrets because Moscow would have modified its equipment before selling it. Moscow last September,

Vladimir Kryuchkov, the head of the KGB, the Soviet intelligence agency, told the Associated Press in an Interview that Moscow would be willing to help the CIA with military intelligence on Iraq.

A U.S. Marine truck carries troops near the Kuwaiti border