Off the Record

Visas well in

advance

to journalists application forms for visas to be used if a multi-national coalition drives Iraq's occupying army from that

country, reports AP.

small oil emirate last Aug. 2.

CAIRO, Feb 5 : Knwait's extled government is distributing

You will be contacted when visas are ready to be issued.

said an instruction sheet accompanying the applications.

Written in English and Arabic at the top of the English-

language form is "government of Kuwajt. Ministry of

Information, Tacef." Knwatt's government has been based in Taif, Saudi Arabia, since shortly after Iraq conquered the

A spokesman for the Kuwait Information Centre said his of-

fice and the extled government's representatives in Dhahran.

Saudi Arabia, were distributing the forms. Hundreds of

foreign reporters use Dhahran as a base for covering the Gulf

they can get their visus to go in after the liberation," said the

be. Air forces of the coalition began massive air raids on fraq

and Kuwait on Jan. 17. So far fighting remains principally an

air war, although fraqi troops have mounted a few incursions

Jogging with dog

spokesman, who asked not to be identified.

into Saudi territory from Kuwait.

"All I've heard since I've been here is people asking when

He acknowledged there is no indication when that might

BREFF

Perez meets UNICEF chief: United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar met Monday with UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) Director General James Grant to discuss the possibility of sending humanitarian aid to Iraqi civilians, reports AFP from New

The Secretary General received Mr Grant's report on the meeting held in Geneva by officials of UN humanitarian agencies to consider how such aid could be sent.

Mr Perez de Cuellar will meet later this week or early next week with other UN agency officials to discuss possible aid to civilians affected by the Gulf war "mainly on the Iraqi side" which he said "needs a lot of support on the humanitarian front."

Iraq shows no sign of cracking: Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's Elite Republican Guard shows no sign of eracking. American commanders intend to keep bombing until it does, reports Reuter.

"We are going to assure that the don't have that punch to hurt us," A US military expert in Riyadh said on Monday.

The Republican Guard, stationed along the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border, has absorbed two weeks of American and Allied air strikes including the huge bomb loads of US B-52s.

But soldiers spread across the desert and dug into the sand can survive bombing unless they are hit directly. American officers say they have little information yet on how badly the Republican Guardsmen have been hurt.

Sharif's formula on ceasefire:

Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Monday unveiled his formula for ending the Gulf war, and declared that he was willing to go to Iraq to promote it, reports AFP from Islamabad.

"I am ready to go to Baghdad in search of peace", Mr Sharif said in the National Assembly, where a debate on the Gulf war opened amid widespread popular sympathy for Iraq among Pakistanis.

The formula envisages and immediate ceasefire after Iraq agrees to withdraw its troops from Kuwait.

Foreign forces now assembled in the Gulf would be replaced by a Pan-Islamic force, and Islamic Summit would be convened to resolve the conflict

Soviet move to end war: Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Belonogov would go to Teheran Tuesday to discuss Iranian initiatives for resolving the ongoing Gulf war. Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Yuri Churkin in Moscow said Monday, reports Xinhua.

The spokesman said that Belonogov was to sound out Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani on his initiatives for settling the Gulf conflict between Iraq and the US led coalitions.

Earlier Monday Rafsanjani offered to meet with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and contact with US officials in search for peace in the Gulf.

According to the official Tass news agency, Syrian Defence Minister Mustafa Tlass arrived in Moscow and met with his Soviet counterpart Dmitri Yazov to discuss the war.

Iraq downs 13 Allied planes: Iraq said Monday the Allies had launched 150 air raids against it since Sunday night and its air defences had shot down 13 Allied aircraft, reports Reuter from Nicosia.

Baghdad radio quoted military communique 37 as saying Iraq also came under missile attack during the period. It gave no figures for the missiles.

Cryptic Iraqi messages: Baghdad radio, which has broadcast Iraqi military communiques and verbal salvoes since the Gulf war began, issued a series of cryptic messages on Monday night from "the main centre," reports

"This is your day, there is no other, " said one of several such messages. It's the decisive day. It's the day for you all to implement the programme of the last gathering." said another.

The messages monitored in Nicosia, were broadcast three times each and later repeated without explanation.

There was speculation that they could be coded messages or a psychological war fare ploy. Anti-Iraq forces and most major news organisations monitor Baghdad radio.

Riyadh holds 742 Iraqi POWs: A Saudi Arabian military spokesman said Monday the Kingdom was holding 742 Iraqi Prisoners of War (POWs) including 43 officers, reports Reuter.

Colonel Ahmed Al-Robayan told a daily briefing that the highest ranking POW officer was a major.

The prisoners included Iraqi soldiers captured during fighting at the Saudi border town of Khafji last week and

others who had crossed the border from Kuwait. He said nine Saudi Arabians were missing in action three coastguards and six civil defence officers and noncommissioned officers.

Robayan in Riyadh said during fighting last week. 11 Iraqi T-55 Tanks and 70 armoured troop carriers (APCS) had been captured, of which 19 APCS were undamaged.

'One sortie a minute': Allied warplanes have been pounding military targets in Iraq and Kuwait at "one sortie a minute" since the start of Operation Desert Storm 19 days ago, a senior US officers in Riyadh said Monday, reports AP.

US Central Command's daily briefing, said 2,700 sorties were flown in the last 24 hours. That brought to more than 44,000 the number of sorties flown by allied aircraft.

Marine Maj Gen Robert Johnston, chief spokesman at the

The latest attacks included the reported destruction of an Iraqi tank column in Kuwait by four Marine Corps AV-8 Harriers, Johnston said.

He said four of the jump-jets "attacked 25 to 30 tanks in defilade position and left 25 tanks burning," according to pilot reports, which are considered preliminary.

In his daily report, Johnston said Allied aircraft continued to hammer at the dug-in positions of the elite Republican Guard in northern Kuwait and along the border with Iraq.

Chinese dissidents' trial unfair: Al'

LONDON. Feb 5: Leading pro-democracy dissidents have not received fair trials in China, the international human rights group Amnesty International said Tuesday, reports

The London-based group said it has protested in writing to the Chinese government about the dissidents imprisonment and their trials, which it said fall far short of interna-

tional standards. These trials are the latest and most visible stage in the Chinese government's repression since the June 4, 1989 crackdown on the Tlananmen square protests," Amnesty In-

ternational said. The organization has estimated at least 1,000 people were killed and thousands injured when troops rushed the

peaceful demonstrations. The recent trials were closed to foreign journalists and independent observers, and defendants were apparently unable to hire lawyers of their choice or call witnesses in their defense, the group said, adding it had sought permission to observe the trials but had received no reply.

The human rights organization said at least 19 leading pro-democracy protesters have been trial since prosecutions of prominent dissidents began in November. "Twelve of them have so far

been sentenced to prison terms ranging from two to seven years for 'counter-revolutionary' offenses". Amnesty International said. It said other sell-known dissidents were to be tried in the next few weeks.

Hundreds of less prominent dissidents have already been tried, others may be on trial in provincial cities, and it was unelear what happened to thousands of others arrested after the protests, the group

Amnesty International said it welcomed the official release of more than 60 people detained since 1989, 14 of whom have been named. It called on the Chinese government to publish a list of all released.

Contacts with Iran confirmed

There's nothing to mediate, says US

WASHINGTON, Feb 5: The united States reacted couly Monday to an offer by Iranian President Alt Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani to mediate the Gulf war, stressing that Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait was the only path to peace, reports

Our purpose is to get Iraq out of Kuwait," said White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater when asked about the Iranian offer.

We're engaged in a military conflict to do that. That's where our focus is and we don't expect that to change,"

State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler added: "Whether it is Iranian mediation or any other nation's

IRAQ__

KUWAIT

Kuwait _

SAUDI ARABIA

100 miles

RIYADH, Feb 5 : The United

States accused Iraq on Monday

of hiding aircraft and other

military assets in civilian

neighbourhoods but said US

and Allied planes would not

start targeting such, areas, re-

some of the aircraft into resi-

dential areas" Major General

Robert Johnston told a military

resorting to moving those

(targets) into civilian areas for

the reason that we are not tar-

geting those civilian areas" he

said. "I think they are simply

trying to protect their assets."

briefing US planes had de-

stroyed or set fire to 25 hid-

den Iragi tanks, said

Washington and its allies would

continue to pound military tar-

gets to clear way for a ground

But he stressed that civilian

Riyadh to

execute

government would 'deal firmly

with anyone found of disor-

derly or subversive activities'

The announcement, came

after unidentified gunmen

opened fire and wounded two

American and one Saudi secu-

The sate will offer a gener-

ous firancial reward to anyone

leading security authorities to

whatever preserves the coun-

try's integrity and protects of

according to Islamic Law.

rity guards Sunday night.

offensive to retake Kuwait.

ports Xinhua.

citizens

Johnston, who told the

"We believe that they are

"We find them trying to put

ports Reuter.

briefing

100 km

City

Oil Facilities

Reported Burning

mediation, in our view there's nothing to mediate."

The only appropriate mediation, in our opinion, that would be appropriate would be for the people who communicate with (Iraqi President) Saddam Hussein to convince him to comply with the 12 United Nations resolutions, "

Secretary of Defence Dick Cheney also held out little hope that Iran's initiative would bear fruit. " If someone can come up

with a diplomatic resolution that achieves that objective. that would be fine, but I frankly don't expect it," he said. "We're now in a situation, having embarked on the course we're on, that we will pursue military action until we "never said anything to us for terrorism.

IRAN

Shuaiba

Abdullah

al-Wafra

target would be avoided. "We

will continue to scrupulously

adhere to our policy that we

52 long-range bombers

pounded lrag's elite

Republican Guard in six raids

Monday and fighter planes

launched 26 strikes against

continues to get the focus of

bombing is intended to force

Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait

or to cripple its army's capac-

they don't have that punch to

hurt us" a US military expert

on the Republican Guard said

at a separate briefing. But he

said there was no sign yet of

the Republican Guard crack-

One US spokesman said on

Monday allied forces had de-

our attention," he said.

"The Republican Guard

US officials say the intense

"We are going to asure that

them.

ity to fight.

Johnston said American B-

will not target civilian areas."

Mina

have achieved our objective. Mr Rafsanjani said earlier Monday Iran was prepared for talks with both the United States and Mr Hussein to end the war between Iraq and the

US led coalition seeking to lib-

erate Kuwait.

He said there had been several Iranian-US contacts "In the last few days" through the Swiss Embassy in Tehran and added that it would be "logical" for Iran to have talks with Washington on ways to end the fighting.

Mr Fitzwater said that while Washington and Tehran had several exchanges with Iran via third parties about Iraqi warplanes which have been taking refuge in Iran, Mr Rafsanjani

about talking to us" about ending the war.

Iran "is not directly involved in this conflict and our interest is in getting Iraq out of Kuwait," he said.

Miss Tutwiler characterized the possibility of direct contact between Tehran and Washington to discuss the Gulf as "a total hypothetical."

"As we have said in the past, we are prepared to meet directly with authorized representatives of the government of Iran to discuss outstanding issues, " she added.

For Washington, the out standing issues include Iran's possible role in gaining the release of US hostages held in Lebanon and Tehran's support

20 Iraqis killed as US bombs residential area

NAJAF , (IRAQ) Feb 5 : American planes dropped 12 bombs on a residential area some five km (three miles) from one of the holiest Shi'ite Muslim shrines, killing at least 20 people and wounding dozens, residents said on Monday, reports Reuter.

Planes of the US-led anti-Iraq alliance, apparently aiming at a telecommunications tower in the town. Hit about 50 houses on January 20, the residents added.

US President George Bush and commanders of the US-led alliance fighting to drive Iraq out of Kuwait have said repeatedly that American and Allied aircraft only attack military targets.

A group of international correspondents, taken round the town by the Iraqi information ministry, saw no signs of damage at the shrine and tomb of Imam Ali, cousin of the prophet Mohammed and symbol for Shi'ites throughout the Muslim world.

But the correspondents saw several houses in the Al-Amir district, a residential area. which had received direct hits. Life in the town . 190 km

(120 miles) south of Baghdad . 'appeared' normal with the market busy and most of the

stroyed at least 300 of Irag's

estimated 4,500 tanks and at

least 350 of its other military

latest attack US planes sur-

Johnston said in one of the

civilian areas, US alleges

But residents were still extremely angry and bitter about the January 20 attack, which also prompted outrage and disgust in Iran, Iraq's predominantly Shi ite neighbour.

shops and restaurants open.

Among the houses hit was that of the Habboubi family.

The building was flattened with the upper storey caving into crush 13 members of the family. Only one person sur-

Thousands of Iragis went to the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala as Safe Havens from the Allied attack.

Under an agreement signed last month, Iranian ptlgrims were permitted to visit shrines at Najaf and elsewhere in Iraq.

Abdul-Amir Habboubi. moved with his family from Baghdad to stay with his brother Rahim in Najaf. Rahim, in his fifties, was

the only member of the family to survive the bombardment, residents said Ammar Mohammed Saced

a 28-year-old soldier, said: "we were altogether 60 people in my aunt's big house. We came from different parts of Iraq to her house seeking safety." Iraq hiding aircraft in

the Iraqi capital, he described

two Americans and a Saudi

guard were hurt by flying glass

when unidentified gunmen

US officials said earlier that

standing records. Sitting on the left is Ranger. - AFP/UNB photo Cost of James Bond fantasy

LOS ANGELES. An overweight, perpetually broke former FBI agent was sentenced on Monday to 20 years imprisonment for supplying secret documents to a beautiful Soviet spy in exchange for sex and promises of money and gold, reports Reuter. Federal Judge Robert Takasugi, in passing sentence, said

WASHINGTON: US President George Bush (C) grabs his

pet dog, Millie, during a jogging session at the Vice-

President's residence on the US naval observatory grounds

on February 4. President Bush was taking advantage of an

unseasonably warm spell that saw temperatures break low

Richard Miller, the first agent of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation to be convicted of espionage, had betrayed a national trust. It was the third trial for Miller who had been described by

his former colleagues as a bumbling agent who faced de motion. Miller was arrested on October 2. 1984, after five days of

intensive questioning by FBI agents, his first trial ended with a deadlocked jury. At the second trial, he was sentenced to life imprison,

ment, but the verdict was overturned on an appeal. Miller, who has been free on bail, will be eligible for parole after serving one third of his sentence. He has already served five years in prison and so could be released within the next

Miller, 53, said when he was arrested that he had indulged in a "James Bond fantasy"-a four-month affair with Soviet emigre Svetlana Ogorodnikova. later convicted of espionage. but that he had never intended to hurt his country.

Sherlock Holmes due for his eye-test

LONDON. An American child writes, 'Dear Sherlock Holmes. . . is there a ghost in my closet? " A boy in Japan asks the famous sleuth for advice on how to be a top detective. reports Reuter.

The Sherlock Holmes Museum's collection of letters addressed to the detective even includes a reminder from an appretan that Holmes is due for his eye test.

Shoals of letters are mailed every week to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's fictional hero - but now has broken out over where they should be delivered.

The museum complains it gets only a fraction of his letters, even though it uses the same address that Conan Doyle gave Holmes: 221b Baker Street, London. The rest are delivered to the same place they were before

the museum was launched in March last year - the Abbey National Loans and Savings Institution whose headquarters span 215 to 229 Baker Street. John Atdiniantz. 34, who set up the Holmes Museum in an

early 19th-century house just up the road, wants Abbey to relinquish its traditional hold on Holme's mail.

Court charges Zardari with kidnapping KARACHI, Feb 5 : A Pakistani

Special Court on the suppression of terrorism Monday formally charged Asif Zardari, husband of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, with

two years.

complicity in a 1989 kidnapping, reports AFP. Mr. Zardari, an opposition

member of the National Assembly, pleaded not guilty to the charges, they He was arrested last August by

the crime investigation agency in connection with the 1989 abduction of a British-based Pakistani businessman, Mustafa Bokhart. A Provincial Assembly member

of Mrs. Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Ghulam Hussain Unnar in 1989 has pleaded not guilty to charges that he committed the kidnapping. He is in police custody.

The prosecution has alleged that Mr. Bokhari was lured into a trap by Mr. Unnar on the pretext of meeting Mr. Zardari at his sea side Karachi residence in order to facilitate a hospital project in which he was involved.

Instead, the prosecution claims, the businessman was kidnapped and kept in confinement pending the signing of ransom cheques .

cording to the prosecution. Mr. Bokhari maintained in a written statement from London that he was taken to a bank in Karachi with a time bomb tied to his led in . order to withdraw funds.

and were given until Tuesday to react to defense requests to quash various charges. The defendants face kidnapping and assault charges in a widely publicized case. Mrs. Mandela emerged

smiling from the courtroom with her husband, African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela, as supporters cheered and chanted her name. A beaming Mrs. Mandela shot her elenched fist into the air as she and her husband were mobbed by admirers.

out to one sortie a minute during operation desert storm to drive Iraq from Kuwait. Asked about a report from

Baghdad of a B-52 attack near

the previous 24 hours.

prised up to 30 Iraqi tanks in fired on an airport shuttle bus Kuwait with bombs and left 25 in the Red Sea Port of Jeddah. of them destroyed or burning. Johnston said it was too early to say it was a terrorist

it as questionable.

Allied planes also attacked attack. "It was a very small taran Iraqi convoy in Kuwait on get and certainly there was a Sunday night, he said, adding contrived terrorist activity. that Iraq had begun reducing Colonel Ahmed al-Robayan, its convoys to about five trucks spokesman for Saudi forces. each to present smaller targets dismissed the shooting as mi-He said over 44,000 sorties nor. "I would not categorise had been flown by nine nations that as and organised terrorist of the anti-Iraq coalition since attack" he said. the start of the Gulf war on Military officials said bullet January 17-2.700 sorties in

scene and a search was un-Johnston said this worked derway for those responsible. Robayan said Saudi Arabia

was holding 742 Iraqi prisoners, including 43 officers. The highest ranking officer was a

casings were found at the



Supreme Court with her husband, African National Congress Deputy President Nelson Mandela (L), February 4. Winnie Mandela appeared briefly in the court on assault and kidnapping charges before the trial was postponed later in the day to allow the state to prepare AFP/UNB photo. amendments to the charges filed.

