18 Saudi Arabians killed in Afghan fighting

ISLAMABAD, Aug 8 : The Soviet-backed Afghan authorities said on Wednesday their forces killed 18 Saudi Arabian nationals in fighting against rebels in the eastern province of Nangarhar, reports Reuter.

The official Kabul Radio the Saudis called "mercenaries" and said they were killed on Tuesday on the highway between Kabul and the main eastern town of Jalalabad.

"Tens of others were seriously wounded," said the broadcast monitored in the Pakistani capital Islamabad.

Rebel sources in Pakistan said the Mujahideen guerillas on Wednesday repelled a fourth government assault in three days aimed at opening the highway they blocked last week. The sources said the guerillas captured three more government posts.

But Kabul Radio said the Armed Forces successful carried out their operations on the highway.

ernment said in a statement.

Government officials had

Mohmand political agent

earlier put the death toll at

Mazhar Ali Shah said the op-

eration against gangs of kid-

nappers, car thieves and drug

traffickers was continuing in

the Haleemzai area of

Mohammand close to the

have bulldozed nine houses

"Up to this morning we

11 troops, bandits killed in NWFP

seven.

Afghan border.

Afghanistan

US Attorney Gen to resign : us

Attorney General Dick Thornburgh will resign soon and be

replaced at least temporarily by Deputy Attorney General

William P Barr, the White House said Wednesday. Thornburgh

is expected to run for the Senate from Pennsylvania, AP from

nouncement of my plans within the near future." If he runs,

he will oppose interim Democratic Sen Harris Wofford for the

The Attorney General told reporters he will "have an an-

Presidential spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said in Maine.

Barr, a deputy attorney general since April 1989, served

where President Bush is vacationing, that Thornburgh "hasn't

with the Central Intelligence Agency from 1973 through

1977. From 1982 through 1983, he was on the domestic pol-

icy staff at the White House during the Reagan administration.

From 1984 through 1989, he was in private practice in

Quayle blasts Castro : Vice President Dan

Quayle on Wednesday called Fidel Castro the "world's

greatest human rights violator" and said the US trade

blockade of Cuba will stay in place until free elections are

The sooner Cuba changes the better off its people will be.

"The world has changed and it's time for Cuba to change.

His remarks came after an 80-minute meeting with

Quayle's four-nation tour began Monday in Venezuela. Its

The group has also focused on promoting President Bush's

President Fernando Collor de Mello as he began a two-day

main objective is increased trade and investment in South

America accompanying Quayle are Commerce Secretary

Enterprise for the Americas initiative, which aims to form a

hemispheric free-trade zone from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego.

Kidnappers to free 2 newsmen in Beirut:

Lebanese kidnappers plan to release two captive journalists.

an American and a Briton, within 24 hours, the wife of a

British hostage said on Wednesday, Reuter reports from

western hostages held by Muslim militants in Lebanon,

quoted British diplomats in Beirut in a television interview.

Israel urged to seize peace potentials

King Hussein urged Israel on Wednesday to seize "the last chance for peace" and negotiate a settlement to the Arab-

Israeli conflict and the Palestinian problem, AP reports from

guage television programme "Encounter" and his conciliatory

language toward the Israeli people were unprecedented in his

present the opportunity that we see," the King said.

fear at everybody around," he added.

from Hawatt for burtal, AP from Mantla says.

in the proposed peace talks.

for them nor do we wish to."

and corruption.

"We hope that on the Israeli side as well can see at the

"I hope they will be able to look at what it is likely to mean

to be out of the fortress, out of the fortress mentality, to see

what peace really means in the broader context of not being

imprisoned within that fortress, overlooking in suspicion and

Hussein stressed that Palestinians should be represented

"We believe firmly and we are committed to the fact that

the Palestinians have indicated that they wish to speak for

themselves, to represent themselves regarding their prob-

lem, so they have to be there," Hussein said. "We can't speak

Call for returning Marcos body:

More than 70 per cent of the members of the Philippines

House of Representatives have called on President Corazon

Aquino to allow the body of Ferdinand Marcos to be returned

of the 205 House members had signed the non-binding reso-

lution by late Wednesday and more were expected to do so.

Rep Salvador Escudero, a pro-Marcos politician, said 151

Mrs Aquino refused to allow the body of the former presi-

Mrs Marcos has said she wants to bring the body of her

The government has charged Mrs Marcos with tax fraud

dent to be returned to the Philippines although she lifted the

entry ban on his widow Imelda and three children last week.

husband home for burial here. Marcos died in September

1989 in Hawaii, where he lived after his ouster in the 1986

popular uprising that propelled Mrs Aquino to power.

Hussein's one-hour appearance on the weekly English-lan-

Sunny M Ann, whose husband Jackie Mann is among 12

Robert Mosbacher and eight US business leaders.

bouring Khyber Agency.

PESHWAR (Pakistan) Aug 8 : Eleven paramilitary soldiers and bandits were killed as security forces swept through a lawless tribal area on Pakistan's North West Frontier flushing out criminals, the government said on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

Three soldiers and at least eight tribesmen died on Tuesday and Wednesday as mandits flushed from their homes battled with government forces in the hills of Mohmand Agency.

Eighteen other soldiers were also wounded, the gov-

Soviets permitted to buy handguns

MOSCOW, Aug 8: Soviet citizens may for the first time be permitted to buy handguns and other weapons for "self defence" under proposed legislation drafted by the interior ministry, Interfax news agency has reported, reports AFP.

Washington says.

given us a date yet."

Quayle told reporters.

Washington.

visit here.

London.

38-year-old rule.

seat held by the late Sen John Heinz.

held in Havana, AP reports from Brasilia.

MIAMI. Aug 8 : A federal judge ordered government Wednesday to turn over classifled documents at the heart of Manuel Noriega's efforts to show he worked with US intelligence agencies in Central American drug deals, a source said, reports AP.

The sealed ruling followed a week of closed hearings last month attended by prosecutors, defense lawyers and attorneys for the CIA and the

the what the government wanted it to be - a garden-variety, run-of-the-mill drug case," defense attorney Frank Rubino said after reading US District Judge William Hoeveler's 41-page opinion.

ing in Central and South



West Bank: A young Palestinian shepherd watches his flock next to the new settlement of Eshkolot (water tower seen in the background) 06 Aug. The settlement, an old military base, was given to Jewish settlers late 05 Aug, as part of the Israeli Housing Ministry policy. Israel refuses to accept any territorial concession despite its participation -AFP photo in a Middle East peace conference.

Pakistan disowns links with retired general

Gen Beg asks Sharif not to

push Opposition to the wall

elections saving that last

October's polls which it lost to

Sharif's Islamic Democratic

The government has re-

Beg enjoys wide respect at

jected the demand and

home for helping restore civil-

ian rule after the death in an

unexplained plane crash of

military President Mohammad

an unspecified enemy for

launching a "calculated cam-

paign of disinformation to sub-

vert political stability in

Pakistan and ... exploiting

politicio-social contradictions

the enemy ploy but try to

counter such threats through

politics of tolerance and ac-

commodation instead of con

Pakistan government said yes-

terday it had no official links

with a retired Pakistani army

officer accused by the United

States of trying to smuggle nu-

Haq was arrested last month in

Retired Brigadier Inam Ul-

clear weapon supplies.

Another report adds: The

flict and revenge," he added.

"We should not fall prey to

for its motives."

APP quoted Beg as blaming

Zia Ul Haq in August 1988.

Alliance had been rigged.

charges of poll rigging.

Court orders US govt to hand over secret papers to Noriega

State Department. "It is now not going to be

"It's going to be in the context of what was really happen-

America ... involving the intelligence communities," he said. Diane Cossin, spokeswoman for the US attorney's office.

said she would not comment

on details of the ruling. "We will abide by any order Judge Hoeveler issues in this case and we are preparing for trial," she said.

The government can appeal Hoeveler's decision to the 11th US Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta, according to Rubino. who also declined to discuss specifics of the ruling.

But a source knowledgeable about the ruling who spoke on the condition of anonymity said Hoeveler agreed the following issues were relevant:

-Documents regarding CIA, Drug Enforcement Administration and other agencies' operations allowing safe passage to drug planes in Panama, Costa Rica and Nicaragua. -Panama's involvement in

the training of US-backed Contra rebels in Nicaragua.

-"Operation Tipped Kettle," the effort by former National Security Council aide Oliver North to collect weapons in the Middle East and deliver them to the Contras.

-Joint US-Noriega drug interdiction efforts.

-- US intelligence agency payments to Norlega. The source said the defense

did not get all it wanted. The judge refused to grant defense access to documents showing whether intelligence agencies used military bases to store drugs bound for the United States, the source said.

Hoeveler also declared irrelevant the alleged secret US cooperation with Panamanian troops to plant bombs in the Panama Canal zone to pressure approval of the Panama Canal Treaty.

The judge also barred use of a plan drawn up in the early 1970s to assassinate Noriega because the Justice Department said the plan was never taken seriously.

Thousands storm ships to leave Albania, 12 die in scramble

VIENNA (Austria), Aug 8: At least 12 Albanians died Wednesday trying to swim to ferries under gunfire from security forces in the Adriatic port of Durres to escape their impoverished nation, Albanian state television reported. says AP.

They were among thousands who frantically tried to quit Albania Wednesday in hopes of getting to Italy and Western prosperity, news reports said.

It was not clear how the 12 died but the TV reported gunfire from security forces. The Tirana resident said police tried in vain to stop the crowds storming the boats.

The port was declared a military zone barred to the public after tens of thousands of Albanians forcibly boarded ships at several ports earlier

Germany and was being held in

a Frankfurt jail pending a court

hearing on a US extradition

He is wanted by

Philadeiphia court on a 1987

warrant alleging he tried to

buy special steel for Pakistan

that could be used to enhance

Pakistan denies it is devel-

A Foreign Ministry

lnam is a private business-

man who holds no official post-

tion in any capacity with the

government, he said. In

Lahore, Inam's lawyer, Najaf

Hussain Shah, said his client

had gone to Germany for talks

with a German company about

a possible joint venture in

Pakistan. Pakistan has often

been accused of trying to

smuggle parts that could be

used in its secret nuclear pro-

gramme. A British newspaper

reported last month that the

collapsed Bank of Credit and

Commerce International

(BCCI) had been involved.

spokesman said no relation

ship existed between the

Brigadier and the government.

a nuclear explosion.

oping nuclear weapons.

request

this year to flee to the West. It is about 80 miles (130 kilometers) from Durres to Brindisi. the closest Italian port across the Adriatic. Thousands of would-be refugees converged on Durres early Wednesday following rumours the port had reopened, the Tirana resident

"There was general hysteria here today," she said, speaking on condition of not being identified. "Everyone wanted to get out, to get to Durres. Above all the young."

ATA, the official Albanian news agency, said Albanians forced their way aboard two ships, the Butrinti and the Skanderbeg, and forced them

It said 4,000 people also boarded and occupted the Vlora, but the ship was apparently still berthed at Durres.

Australia to cut

further flow

of immigrants

CANBERRA, Aug 8

Australia may accept fewer

immigrants if the intake

strains community welfare services, Immigration Minister

Gerry Hand said yesterday, re-

ing its immigration pro-

gramme with ethnic groups

was a need to cut or expand

the immigration programme I

would have no hesitation in do-

take this financial year has al-

ready been cut by 15,000 from

126,000 because of the poor

Sino-Vietnam

talks begin

BEIJING, Aug 8: China and

Vietnam began rare official

talks in Beijing today, a

further sign that two of Asia's

last communist powers are

putting aside their differences

in the face of a worldwide re-

treat from socialism, reports

Minister Xu Dunxin greeted

his Vietnamese counterpart

Ngyyen Dy Nien at the start of

three days of lalks

Chinese Deputy Foreign

state of the economy.

Australia's immigration in-

ing it." Hand told reporters.

"If I was to find that there

throughout the country.

The government is review-

ports Reuter.

Off the Record

Muscles from Brussels

LOS ANGELES: Actor Jean-Claude Van Damme.the socalled "Muscles from Brussels" and champ of martial arts movies, hopes his new offering will help kick his beefcake image and show audiences he can act, reports AP.

"Karate was a way of introducing myself," Van Damme said. "There is a lot more to Van Damme than karate, but if I had come here and said I wanted to do Shakespeare, I'd still be driving a taxi."

Van Damme came to the United States from Belgium nine years ago and signed a contract for a series of such lowbudget martial arts films as "Bloodsport," "Kickboxer," "Lionheart" and "Death Warrant."

He is now free of that contract, and says he has carefully plotted his next four movies to raise him above his martial arts status and put him up with the likes of Arnold Schwarzenegger, whom Van Damme admires.

"It is understandable that we are compared, but I don't want to be the next Arnold. I want to be the next Van Damme," he said in a recent interview to promote his new

In "Double Impact," which opens Friday, Van Damme plays two roles - twin brothers who are separated after the murder of their parents in Hong Kong."



Charles, Di on a second 'honeymoon'

NAPLES (Italy): The Prince and Princess of Wales boarded a private yacht moored in Naples harbor and set sail Wednesday on a vacation British press reports described as a "second honeymoon," reports AP.

Prince Charles, Princess Diana and sons William and Henry headed toward an unspecified destination aboard the Alexandra, a 50-meter (55-yard) white and blue yacht on loan to the royal couple. The identity of the owner could not immediately be determined. The couple arrived in Naples Wednesday afternoon aboard

a private aircraft and drove immediately to the nearby NATO naval base, where they were greeted by naval officials and a crowd of hundreds of onlookers. The princess, dressed in a red flowered dress, waved to a

group of children in bathing suits before the family boarded a motorboat that took them to the yacht.

Palace officials in London have declined to say where the couple will vacation.

British newspapers have reported that the vacation was a

second honeymoon aimed at dampening rumors that the marriage is troubled. Italian news agencies, citing sources widely quoted in the

British press, said the voyage would retrace the route of the royal honeymoon, with stops on Capri. the Amalfi coast, the isle of Eolie, Sicily and Greece. The agencies said other sources said the couple would sail directly to Sicily and then

\$ 250m libel

NEW YORK: Millionaire Donald Trump announced plans Wednesday to sue the New York Post for 250 million dollars for publishing what he said were "false and defamatory stories" about him, reports AP. The straw that broke The Donald's back was a Monday

story in the New York tabloid headlined "Trump Loses Top Aides, But Not Marla."

A statement from Trump's attorney. Jay Goldberg, said the lawsuit will be filed in Manhatan within the next several

 The story in question was a United Press International rewrite of a story which appeared Sunday in the Philadelphia Inquirer, said Post Editor Jerry Nachman.

"It appears to me the purpose of this alleged lawsuit is for Mr Trump to get some more news coverage. He apparently will succeed", said Nachman.

The story said most of Trump's top executives, including his brother, were running out of the developer's troubled financial empire. It added that Trump's fiance, Marla Maples,

Zayed completes 25 years as Abu Dhabi ruler

Reuter.

ABU DHABI, Aug 8: Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahayan, the biggest shareholder in the disgraced Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI). this week completed 25 years as ruler of the wealthy Gulf emirate of Abu Dhabi. reports AFP.

Sheikh Zayed and other members of his family own 77 per cent of BCCI, which was shut down by Britain and other countries for alleged fraud but given four months last week to avert liquidation of its British operation.

The crisis, which could put an end to one of the largest international financial institutions, has apparently not shaken the 75-year-old leader, whose emirate is a major oil producer.

Last month he went ahead with his annual vacation abroad, spending several days in Switzerland before going to Morocco. He even donated 250 million Dirhams (68 million

dollars) to build a hospital in the North African country. whose ruler King Hassan II is a close friend.

Since the BCCI scandal surfaced two months ago. Shetkh Zayed has made no public comment, leaving the problem for the Central Bank and other monetary authorities in the

"Sheikh Zayed is a wise but also a tough man," commented an Arab diplomat who has met the Bedouin leader several times. "He will certainly not let a problem like BCCI upset

Sheikh Zayed's wealth is not known but bankers estimate the Abu Dhabi government's overseas assets at more than 50 billion dollars.

The investments were built

from oil revenues, which have exceeded 500 billion Dirhams (156 billion dollars) over the past 10 years. But much of the money was



channelled into development and infrastructure, turning Abu Dhabi from a small desert oasis into one of the most modern cities in the Middle East.

Money also played a major

role in keeping together Abu Dhabi and its six partners in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), of which Sheikh Zayed has been President since it was created in 1971.

Sheikh Zayed was the architect of the UAE federation. established a year after Britain ended its 150-year-old presence in the Gulf.

planned to "stand by her man."

His emirate, which sits on more than 90 per cent of the country's crude reserves of 100 billion barrels. The bulk of the federal Budget, the main wheel of development in the poorer emirates.

Oil has also made the UAE one of the largest aid donors relative to its Gross Domestic Product (GDP), intending in some years about 20 per cent of its GDP. Total UAE aid stood at around eight billion dollars

between 1970 and 1988. Sheikh Zayed's largest per sonal donation was a sum of 90 million dollars, provided in 1986 to finance the reconstruction of the historic Mareb

Dam in north Yemen. Sheikh Zayed became ruler of Abu Dhabi on August 6, 1966, replacing his brother Sheikh Shakhbout, whom the family found unfit to rule.

Sheikh Shakhbout died two

The pace of development was slow during the first years of Sheikh Zayed's reign, as oil exports had just started. But it later gained momentum when oil earnings reached 10-15 billion dollars a year. From less than 10 billion

Dirhams (2.7 billion dollars) in the early 1970's, the UAE's GDP reached about 123 billion Dirhams (33.5 billion dollars) in 1990. Sheikh Zayed was born in

Abu Dhabi but spent most of his childhood (100 miles)

Although he has encouraged modernisation, he still yearns for the harsh desert lifes-style of the past. A keen falconer, he is also noted for his strong interest in camel and boat races, and farming.

Sometimes he has abandoned his luxury palaces and official formalities to spend several weeks in remote areas and islands to meet and eat with residents under tents in sizzling desert heat.

where these people have taken shelter," he said by telephone. The destruction of houses is a traditional punishment for criminals in Pakistan's semiautonomous tribal belt on the northwest frontier with Shah said the latest operation, the first of this size in two years was prompted by a spate of kidnappings, including the abduction of a New Zealand aid worker who was released this week in neigh-

ISLAMABAD. Aug

Pakistan's Army Chief on

Wednesday appealed for poli-

tics of tolerance and said the

Nawaz Sharif government

should not push political op-

ponents to the wall, reports

who is due to retire in 10 day's

time, called for a "national

consensus" as he spoke to

troops in the southwestern

be pushed to the wall," the of-

ficial APP news agency quoted

him as saying. This has cost us

days after opposition politi-

cians in the Pakistan

Democratic Alliance (PDA)

staged a 12-hour hunger strike

to protest against what they

call repressive policies of

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's

marked the first anniversary of

her ousting as Prime Minister

of Tuesday saying she now ex-

pected to be bundled out of

The PDA demands a neutral

government to hold fresh

PDA leader Benazir Bhutto

Beg's remarks came three

"The opposition should not

General Mirza Aslam Beg.

Reuter.

town of Quetta.

dearly in the past."

government.

parliament too.