sign accord

TASHKENT (Soviet Union). Aug 15: The Soviet Union's five Central Asian Republics signed a cooperation agreement on Wednesday to marry their struggling economies and reduce their dependence on Moscow, reports Reuter.

The pact, bringing together more than 50 million people on land stretching from the Caspian Sea to the Chinese border, attempts to set up direpublics to replace the old central supply channels, controlled by Moscow.

Rebels kill 41

erday (Wednesday), says

Another 77 were injured and an unknown number of people were abducted, said the

The radio also said that the seated.

LAHORE, Aug 15: Prime demanded fresh elections un-der a neutral caretaker gov-Minister Nawaz Sharif threat-

ened on Wednesday to destroy

the Pakistan People's Party

(PPP) of opposition leader

Benazir Bhutto, reports Reuter.

on the 44th anniversary of

Pakistan's independence, was

one of the harshest against his

main political foe since taking

body utters the People's Party's

name," Shartf told tens of

thousands of people brought in

to the Punjab provincial capi-

tal of Lahore by special trains

and buses. "I wish to strike and

He earlier laid the founda-

tion stone of a monument to

mark the migration of millions

of Muslims to Pakistan from

India when British India was

partitioned at independence in

due to address a rival public

rally in a show of popular

1990 and was defeated," Sharif

said in a reference to last

October's elections which his

Islamic Democratic Alliance

challenge, you will lose," he

said. "You had lost yesterday

and you will lose today as well."

on what it called massive vote

rigging after president Ghulam

Ishaq Khan sacked Bhutto's

government a year ago on dis-

puted charges of abuse of

came only two days after the

party and its opposition allies

Sharif's attack on the PPP

"I tell her don't throw the

The PPP blamed its defeat

(IDA) won by a landslide.

Across the city, Bhutto was

"She had challenged us in

"My blood botls when some-

office last November.

break it into pieces."

strength.

The premier's attack, made

ernment. The 22 opposition groups threatened that opposition deputies in the national assembly would resign unless the demand was met.

Sharif reacted to the threat by saying: "We have many peo-ple waiting, please don't delay the resignation."

AFP adds: Nawaz Sharif and his main rival, Benazir Bhutto, held separate rallies in Lahore Wednesday in what was seen as a show of strength on 45th meeting at the historic Mochi independence day.

Buses, trucks and other ve-Sharif's Pakistan Muslim hicles continued to transport League (PML), meanwhile, arparty supporters to Pakistan's ranged a rally at Walton Park. second-biggest city, which is ostensibly to lay the foundaalso known as its unofficial tion stone. political and intellectual capi-

But political observers said the occasion became a direct Roads were blocked at sevcompetition to pull in crowds eral intersections as vehicles after Bhutto, intensifying pressure on Sharif to quit, vowed coloured flags of Bhutto's earlier this month to address a Pakistan People's Party (PPP) huge rally in Lahore. continued to bring crowds for

The former premier's challenge came after she led the



bedecked with the tri-

BOSTON: US former hostage Edward Tracy embraces his daughters Monica (L) and Margrot August 14 on his arrival at Boston's Veterans Hospital. Tracy was held hostage in Lebanon for five years and is in Boston for medical treatment. - AFP/UNB photo

India denies reports of parades, flag hoisting by Kashmiri militants

SRINAGAR, Aug 15: Five persons including two militants were killed while some senior state government functionaries narrowly escaped an attempt on their lives Wednesday, reports PTI.

Thirty one suspects including two Pakistan trained militants, were arrested and curfew was imposed in Baramulla, Anantnag and parts of Srinagar.

Denying reports of parades and flag hoisting by militants in connection with the independence day of Pakistan, government spokesman told reporters that some militants hurriedly collected at two places in the city on Tuesday and managed to get themselves photographed to show that they had held parades on Pakistan independence day as announced by them.

No such parades took place in Srinagar or elsewhere in the valley on Wednesday and suitable precautionary measures were taken to deal with the situation.

Meanwhile Izrahil group, a new militant outfit claimed responsibility for the abduction of Mr S L Khosa, branch manager of New India Assurance Company, Mr Khosa, 38, was picked up from his Midency Road office on Tuesday by four armed youth who broke into his office.

AP from New Delhi adds: Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao Thursday called on separatist rebels in the states of Punjab and Kashmir to eschew violence and pledged to work with them to resolve their

grievances. The Prime Minister's speech to the nation on the

Mujahideen kill 20

ISLAMABAD, Aug 15: Afghan Mujahideen launched a rocket attack on Kabul the day after missile struck a crowded bus killing at least 20 people. Afghanistan's official Bakhtar news agency said today, reports Reuter.

Four rockets were fired from hills around the Afghan capital yesterday, wounding four people in residential ar-

On Tuesday one rocket hit a bus, sending shrapnel and shards of glass scything through the vehicle and nearby shops. About 34 people were

injured. Bakhtar, accused the Pakistan Army of supplying the rockets to the Mujahideen, who are trying to topple the Soviet-backed government in

44th anniversary of independence made no promises of amnesty to the rebels. But his remarks were a departure from the usual hard line followed by the government.

They also spelt out for the first time the course the 55day-old government will follow in tackling the insurrections launched by religious minori-

"I want to make it clear. nothing will be gained by terrorism," Rao said after unfurling the national flag on the entrance to the 16-century Red Fort in the heart of the capital.

The rebels "can never realize their objectives in this way," he said. "Let them come forward, we can all find a solution. There is no problem to which a solution cannot be

In both states, militants called for a boycott of celebrations marking the anniversary of independence.

In Punjab, a rich farming state, at least 3,750 people have been killed this year in a relentless war by Sikh rebels to form an independent homeland.

Muslim separatists in the picturesque Kashmir valley have been fighting for independence since the beginning of 1990.

opposition leaders to a 12hour hunger strike in Islamabad to protest what she called "black laws" - the new legislation Sharif has enacted

to curb a surge in crimes. On the eve of her public meeting, she attended an All Parties Conference (APC). here, which was attended by more than 20 political groups of varying shades, including her four-party People's Democratic Alliance.

The APC highlighted "failures" of the government in controlling inflation and unemployment, and a compromise on the nation's controversial nuclear programme under alleged US pressure.

It threatened en masse resignations of opposition deputies if the governments at the centre and the four provinces were not replaced by leaders representing a national consensus.

Bhutto gave no date while Sharif, in a countermove, succeeded in bringing the leftleaning Awami National Party (ANP) into his folds. The pro-Moscow party accepted Sharif's long-standing offer of two ministerial posts in the federal cabinet.

Sharif, who dismissed the APC as a drama, criticised the conduct of some opposition leaders who were "making efforts to damage democracy and destroy democratic institutions in the country."

Stressing that the nation stood behind him in dealing harshly with criminals he said the opposition's efforts against his government were bound to fizzle out.

A handful of subversive elements could not be allowed to play with the destiny of the nation, he said adding that his policies would usher in an era of peace and prosperity in Pakistan.

Bhutto's meeting was to last late into the night.

Observers said that because gatherings at public meetings are considered barometres of a party's popularity in Pakistan, both sides made major organisational efforts to attract large

Newspaper office raided in Madras: 2 killed

NEW DELHI, Aug 15: A group of 20 people raided a local news weekly office and stabbed to death two employ ees in Madras today (Wednesday), the Press Trust of India (PTI) said, reports

An unspecified number of staff with the Tamil language weekly. Tharasu, were seriously injured, PTI said.

Shyam (eds: one name) Editor of the weekly, alleged the attack was the work of activists from the Sri Lankan Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)

He said the LTTE activists had raided the office with the backing of supporters from the local Tamil population due to differences with the weekly's editorial stance.

However, there was no official confirmation of the editor's claims.

USSR's 5 central Asian republics Sharif threatens to destroy PPP Off the Record

Free bus ride for Orissa journalists

CUTTACK: All working journalists in Orissa can soon travel by buses freely in the state, reports PII.

They could avail themselves of full concession in the buses owned by the public sector Orissa State Road Transport Corporation as well as private buses, said Mr Satya Ray, General Secretary to the Utkal Journalists Association.

He said that a decision to this effect had been taken at a meeting with the Transport Minister, Mr Bhagabat Behera and Information and Public Relation Minister. Mr Sarat Kumr Kar on Monday last.

He said that the District Information and Public Relations Department would furnish the names of the correspondents to the state government and the newspapers would furnish the names of those working in the desk for issue of necessary travel passes.



CEMINAC (Yugoslavia): An elderly Croatian woman weeps in front of a Croatian soldier here early August 14 following an overnight Serbian mortar bomb attack on this east Croatia village. Three Croatian para-military policemen were killed overnight and 23 wounded in fierce clashes in the Osijek region. - AFP/UNB photo

Indonesian National Day to be celebrated with poetry

JAKARTA: About 70 prominent Indonesian figures, including Cabinet Ministers and business tycoons, will hold a joint poetry reading on the eve of National Day, press reports said here on Thursday, reports AFP.

The open air poetry reading, part of the city's commemoration of National Day on August 17, will be held on Friday evening at Jakarta's vast Central Square near the State Palace, the Merdeka Daily said.

The head of the Organizing Committee, Mayor General Syaukat Banjaransari, said the event, scheduled to last at least six hours, would present a wide range of poetry with patriotism, the struggle for independence and religions as their themes.

Among the readers would be Coordinating Minister of Security and Political Affairs Sudomo, Education and Culture Minister Fuad Hasan, leading playright and poet Willy Rendra, business tyeoons William Soveryadjaya and Ciputra, and President Suharto's eldest daughter Siti Hardiyanti Indra Rukmana, Syaukat said.

The readers would take part as individuals and not in their official capacities, Syaukat added.

Noriega to rule Panama, if released

MIAMI: Toppled Panamanian strongman Manuel Noriega plans to govern his country again if he is released from US custody, his attorney said on Wednesday, reports Reuter. He's going to go back and run the country of Panama as he

did in the past, Frank Rubino told a Miami radio station. The lawyer was not immediately available for further com-

ment, his Secretary said. In his radio statement, Rubino described the current USsupported Panamanian government of Guillermo Endra as

"having one foot on a banana peel." Lord knows how long that government is going to last, he

Noriega was brought to the United States in January 1990 following a December 20, 1989, invasion of Panama by US

He is scheduled to go on trial next month on charges of drug trafficking and money-laundering.

Bakhtiar persuaded Shah to leave Iran

PARIS Aug 15: Shapour Bakhtiar, stabbed to death with lan aide at his home outside Paris on Thursday lived in fear for his life since fleeing Iran 12 years ago after serving just five weeks as Prime Ministers

reports Reuter. Bakhtiar (76) became a focus for opposition to Iran's Islamic republic and the rule of the Ayatollahs during his extle in France and was sentenced to death in absentia by

the Tehran authorities. He survived an assassination attempt in 1980 when four Arabs attacked his flat shooting dead a police man and a neighbour. He lived under permanent guard mounted by four French policeman and his own security

Bakhtiar said he was puzzled when President Francois Mitterrand, seeking improved relations with Iran, last July freed Anis Naccache, the Lebanese guerilla who led the

A moderate pragmatist who always believed in a need for compromise, Bakhtiar was the focus of a group of anti-Khomeini dissidents in 1980. He announced the formation of a national resistance movement to help overthrow the Islamic republic.

The structure of our national economy is shattered. laws and order discredited, women treated as slaves, minorities oppressed, tongues tted and pens broken, he said at the time. He remained in touch with

his homeland through a network of supporters in Iraq. coded messages and letters, he dreamt of return in to power udder a restored monarch and believed the era established by the late

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeni was doomed.

Bakhtiar was the fourth and last in a succession of Prime Ministers appointed by Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi in a desperate attempt to save the monarchy. A former deputy leader of

the Opposition, he took control of a country seething with resentment against the Shah and mounting support for Islamic leader Khomeint. But Bakhtiar's liberal

Westernism was as unwelcome as the Shah's modern tendencies, he resigned in despair after governing for a stormy five weeks his compromise polices collapsing as Khomeini swept to power.

He disappeared and remained in hiding for five and a half months before resurfacing at Paris airport. His life as an extle had begun. He was killed at his home

in the western suburb of sureness, on the bank of the Seine,



A FLASHBACK: Shapour Bakhtiar with his bodyguards in Paris after fleeing from Iran in 1979.

where he lived quietly with his family. His son, who joined the French police raised the alarm when he failed to reach Bakhtiar by telephone.

Like many middle class Iranians of his generation. Bakthtiar was at home in France. He was educated in Betrut and Paris, and graduated from the Sorbonne with a law degree.

He fought with French foreign region in World War Two and when he returned to Iran in 1946 he could hardly speak Persian.

After founding a prosperous law practice, he became Secretary General of the Iran party a component of the National Front which for years worked in secret opposition to the Shah's autocratic rule. He was reported to have been ailed six times for anti-Shah activities.

The Shah gradually eased political controls and in 1978 the National Front came out into the open, with Bakhtiar as Deputy Chief.

Once appointed Prime Minister in January 1979, Bakhtiar persuaded the Shah to leave Iran with his family on an open-ended holiday which was to become permanent extle. In western terms Bakhtiar was a liberal social democrat.

During his brief rule he worked for press freedom, the abolition of Martial Law, and dissolution of Iran's hated secret police. He also wanted to eliminate

the corruption which had grown up during the Shah's 37-year rule promising exemplary punishment for those guilty of violating human rights or abasing their positions.

Although nominally a Shi'ite Muslim he believed in the separation of church and state and

did not think the Mullahs had the abilities needed to govern But his authority was re-

peatedly challenged by Khomeini, who demanded his resignation. His position was fatally undermined when he was expelled by the National Front, which had rejected any participation in a government under the Shah.

Western experts praised Bakhtiar's qualities of quiet diplomacy and pragmatism, but like other opposition leaders, he was unable to mount a viable challenge to Khomeini's fundamentalist revolution inside Iran.

Bakhtiar buried

PARIS. Aug 15 : Former Iranian Prime Minister Shapur Bakhtiar was buried at the Montparnasse graveyard in central Paris Wednesday, more than a week after he was murdered at his home at Suresnes, to the west of the city, reports Around 500 family mem

bers and sympathisers at tended the ceremony, which was conducted amidst a strong security presence.

Entrances and exits to the graveyard were blocked off apart from the main entrance, and there were police checks on traffic in neighbouring streets. French police are searching

for three Iranian nationals believed to have killed Bakhtiar and his private secretary Surush Katibel on August 6. Bakhtiar was the last

Iranian Prime Minister under the Shah of Iran prior to his overthrow at the end of 1979.

Israel won't free Arab detainees

TEL AVIV. Aug 15: Israel said it would not be releasing any Arab detainees in coming days as hopes for a quick deal on the hostage crisis faded. reports Reuter. "There is no truth to re-

ports according to which Israel is preparing to release Lebanese prisoners in the coming day," Defence Ministry spokesman Danny Naveh said late on Wednesday. Israel negotiator Uri

Lubrani said after meeting UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar in Geneva that talks of a time frame for a release was not the solution. But he said the meeting was 'very fruitful and very good."

However, Israel radio said Perez de Cuellar unable to give the Israeli negotiators the information their government has demanded on the fate of seven servicemen missing in Lebanon.

Israel has said it must have proof of what has happened to the men before making any deal involving the release of some 400 Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners it holds.

James Roosevelt dead

NEWPORT BEACH (California). Aug 15: Former Congressman James Roosevelt, the eldest son of President Franklin Roosevelt, died on Tuesday at his home in Newport Beach, California, at the age of 83, officials said, reports Reuter.

They said Roosevelt's wife, Mary, was at her husband's side when he died of natural

rect trading links between the

Those channels have broken down as the vast country moves to introduce a market economy.

In Mozambique

MAPUTO, Aug 15: The Mozambique National Resistanoe (RENAMO) rebels killed 41 people in their attack on the southern Mozambican town of Chibuto on Friday, Radio Mozambique reported yest-

rebels looted 77 houses and shops during the raid on the town, about 180 kilometres orth of Mozambique's capital Maputo, where the Gaza provincial command of the Mozambican Armed Forces is

Barge with 198 men sinks off China:

An oil exploration barge with 198 persons aboard sank in a

typhoon off southern China on Thursday and initial reports

said one person had died and 71 others were rescued, the Hong Kong government reported, says AP from Hong Kong. The government said Hong Kong-based ships and helicopters were heading to the scene of the disaster, 105

kilometers (65 miles) east of Hong Kong. 'We don't know too much detail about the nature of the incident at the moment' said a spokesman for the British Forces involved in the rescue operations. "We know there is a typhoon blowing and I would think the vessel will be in the middle of it."

New President of Laos: Prime Minister Kaysone Phomythane, one of the most durable of Indochina's old-guard revolutionaries, was elected President of Laos today, a broadcast monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) said, reports Reuter from London.

The BBC, monitored in London, said the proceedings of the third day of a meeting of the supreme people assembly were broadcast live on Laotian radio. The assembly was charged with making sweeping changes

in the country's leadership approving the country's first constitution since the 1975 Communist takeover and setting rules for elections. Studentsteargassed in Seoul: Rot police fired tear gas Thursday to disperse students preparing

unification with Communist North Korea, reports AP from Police warned attempts to reach the border would be

to march to the closed and heavily armed border to promote

Riot police fired tear gas from black armoured police vans after several hundred of about 15,000 students holed up at a banned rally tried to leave from the main gate of Seoul's

blocked by force.

Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. 'Unify the fatherland' shouted students, hurling firebombs and rocks. The campus is one of two adjacent schools encircled by police.

Rocket with satellite blasts off: An

Ariane rocket earrying a 4.2 tonne satellite blasted off from a European space base in the jungles of French Guiana late on Wednesday, reports Reuter from French Guiana. Observers watching the launch from a control centre 12 km (7.5 miles) from the launch pad felt the ground shake during lift off at 8:15 pm (2315 GMT). A flash of light lit up a

birds into nearby jungle. The rocket was visible in the night sky for more than three minutes. Twenty two minutes after lift off, the Ariane rocket equipped with four liquid strap-on boosters deployed the

cloudy equatorial sky and the roar of the rocket scattered

Intelsat VI-F5. A 4,296 kg (9,470 pound) telecommunications satellite for the 121-nation Intelsat organisation. 20 soldiers killed in Peru: Leftist guerillas killed 20 members of Peru's security forces in two separate ambushes this week, one in the country's main coca

growing region, radio reports and officials said on Wednesday, reports Reuter from Lima. Two guerillas also died in operations following the attacks. Eleven marines died and four were injured when guerillas ambushed a marine patrol in Aguaytia, 400 kms (240 miles) northeast of Lima on Tuesday night, radio programme Del Peru said in a report from its correspondent in the region.

Aguaytia is located in the heart of Peru's coca-growing region in the Amazon jungle. 15 missing as boat capsizes in India: | Fifteen people were missing after a boat accident Wednesday in a river in the eastern state of Orissa where some 2.5 million people have been affected by floods, the Press Trust

A boat with 39 people on board capstzed on the Mahanadi river in coastal Orissa's Cuttack district, state government officials were quoted as saying. Twenty four of them swam to safety while the rest were missing, the officials said in Bhubaseswar, Orissa's capital.

Two million people spread over some 2,000 villages were

of India (PII) said, reports AFP from New Delhi.

officially said to have been hit by serious floods from the monsoon fed Mahanadi river, PTI said. Puri and Balasore districts were also affected by the floods. Yslav team to monitor truce in Croatia: Yugoslav federal authorities are to send observers into strifetorn Croatia to help prop up a shaky peace between Serbs

civil war, reports Reuter from Belgrade. A federal official said a group of observers would move in to Croatian trouble-spots by Thursday at the latest to monitor a ceasefire declared on August 7.

and Croats and plan a new round of high level talks to avert

Serb guerillas and Croatian security forces have been fighting deadly gun and mortar battles in the breakaway Yugoslav republic in clear disregard of the truce declared by the state presidency. Yugoslav authorities also announced federal leaders and

chiefs of the country's six feuding republics would hold fresh

talks about the future of the Balkan state.