

Flash flood claims 139 lives in India

CHANDIGARH, July 13: Torrential monsoon rains triggered flash flooding in parts of India, killing 139 people...

of Himachal Pradesh, rain cut mountain highways, stranding 500 tourists in the Lahaul valley...

Efforts to clear roads to evacuate them to safety were hampered by heavy rain and snow...

The India-Tibet highway was blocked for a third day by landslides along with several other roads...

Forty-seven people have died in Himachal, 45 in the western coastal state of Gujarat, 18 in northern Uttar Pradesh...

A total of 123 people were killed in five other states.

Parts of Patiala, a former princely state of 400,000 people, were under waist-deep water, forcing thousands to scramble to safety from ground floor homes...

The National Institute of Sports in Patiala, India's premier sports academy, was underwater.

The situation is very bad, Patiala administrator T C Gupta said.

Nearly 10,000 soldiers were plugging breached embankments and rescuing marooned residents in Patiala and elsewhere in Punjab.

Rain also killed 11 people in Kashmir, damaging railway tracks and roads, officials said in Jammu, the states winter capital...

Kashmir newspapers urged secessionist Muslim militants to halt violent activity so rescue and relief efforts could be put into effect.

Washington regrets loss of life US hints at more attacks in Somalia

WASHINGTON, July 13: The United States said Monday it regretted the loss of life in a UN-backed US attack in Somalia but said that more such attacks may be necessary...

Washington regrets loss of life

Somalis set upon the four photographers after US army helicopters fired rockets at building occupied by the war-lord's supporters.

McCurry also stressed that the highest death toll in the at-

tack, more than 100, had been provided by supporters of Somali warlord General Mohamed Farah Aidid.

"It was a precision-directed (US) attack that occurred under the auspices of UN Security Council resolution 837" the State Department spokesman said.

"It was designed to continue

the pressure on the Aided faction to stop interfering with the provision of humanitarian relief aid and disrupting civilian authority," he added.

McCurry declined to respond to Italy's request that military operations be suspended and priority given to peace talks.

Another report from Mogadishu adds: UN forces killed about 70 people on Monday when they attacked a meeting of aides of Somalia's main warlord, his supporters said, in a raid that sparked the revenge killing of at least one foreign journalist.

After the raid, an angry mob at the scene killed German photographer Hans Kraus, who worked for the Associated Press (AP) news agency, AP Regional Bureau Chief Reid Miller said in Nairobi.

Another photographer and sound technician working for Reuters news agency was also said to have been killed by the crowd, along with a second Reuter photographer. An Italian television journalist was reported missing.

Italian journalists identified the two Reuters journalists reported killed as Dan Eldon and Os Miana, both British. They added that a Kenyan television journalist, Anthony Makereri, had also been killed. The ANSA news agency reported in Rome.



MOGADISHU: Cameraman Mohamed Chafi from Reuter's Television is carried on a pick-up truck to the American hospital in Mogadishu on Monday after he was attacked and mobbed by Somalis.

BRIEFLY

Sharma starts 4-nation tour: Indian President Shankar Dayal Sharma left yesterday on a four-nation tour, which will take him to Ukraine, Turkey, Hungary and Britain, AFP reports from New Delhi.

US ME coordinator in Amman: US Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross arrived in Amman from Damascus on Monday on a regional tour trying to rescue stalled Arab-Israeli peace talks...

5 hurt in Gujranwala blast: A bomb exploded in a vegetable market in the central Pakistan town of Gujranwala Monday injuring five people, police said...

400 Indonesians die during Hajj: Nearly 400 Indonesian Muslims died in Saudi Arabia during the Hajj pilgrimage there, Religious Affairs Minister Tarmizi Tahaer said Monday...

Highest Kuwaiti award for Powell: Kuwait on Monday awarded one of its highest honours, The Dhih Wishah Medal, to the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell for his role in liberating the Emirate...

32 die in China flood: Death toll in flooding caused by torrential rain in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong rose to 32 with at least 100 people injured...

49 journalists killed or missing in '92: Forty-nine journalists were killed or reported missing throughout the world in 1992, the Commission for the Protection of Journalists said...

US floods force 50,000 to evacuate

ST LOUIS, July 13: Floods forced the evacuation of up to 50,000 people from Des Moines, Iowa, on Monday as a swollen Mississippi river continued its rampage over a large area of the middle west...

St. Louis forcing evacuations there.

Meanwhile, thousands of volunteers and army personnel put up 2.5 million sandbags in a desperate battle against the clock to contain the mighty Mississippi.

But the river breached one floodwall in south St. Louis and cascaded in to the river Des Peres, flooding nearby farms and homes.

"There's massive sandbagging at such trouble spots as Arnold, Kimmswick and Ste Genevieve, Missouri," said Ken Kruchowski of the US Army Corps of Engineers in St. Louis.

He said about 200 families were being evacuated from the river Des Peres area, where electricity and other utilities are

being cut off on Monday night.

The flood waters continued to cripple Des Moines, where the Des Moines and Raccoon rivers merge. As of Monday, more than 50,000 residents had been evacuated from their homes and an estimated 300,000 people left without drinking water and an estimated 35,000 without electricity.

Iowa Governor Terry Branstad described the flooding as "the worst natural disaster we've ever had."

Residents of Des Moines and surrounding communities were warned not to drink the water. Truckloads of clean water were being meted out in five-gallon (18 litre) allotments from 29 distribution centres. City workers,

even lifeguards from local pools, were pressed in to service doling out water to long queues of people.

The US Department of Defence said it will supply 40 emergency water purification systems for the area. Some officials have estimated that it might take up to a month before ordinary tap water will be safe to drink in Iowa's biggest city.

Midwest Power Co said 35,000 of its customers were without electricity on Sunday. Officials predicted service could be distributed for some customers for up to a week.

Des Moines officials asked local businesses to stay closed Monday. "We're in a disaster mode," said Mayor John 'Pat' Dorrian.

Georgia, Abkhazia fail to agree on ceasefire

TBILISI, July 13: Georgia is ready to withdraw the bulk of its forces from the breakaway Abkhazia region including the capital Sukhumi in exchange for the withdrawal of volunteers who have been fighting alongside separatists, a western diplomat said Monday...

restoring their institutions in Sukhumi after the departure of Georgian forces.

At least 1,000 people have died in the fighting in Abkhazia which broke out last August when Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze sent troops to storm the Abkhazian Parliament, one month after it declared sovereignty from Georgia.

Shevardnadze returned to the Georgian Capital Tbilisi from a 10 days stay in Sukhumi Monday and vowed that the black sea city would not fall under rebel control.

Pastukhov, quoted by Interfax News Agency, said the talks were stalled over the Abkhazian insistence on

End of Cold War makes Japan enemy of US, Russia?

TOKYO, July 13: Foreign Minister Kabuo Muro said Monday that the end of Cold War had pushed the United States and Russia closer together, but had changed Japan into a common enemy, the Kyodo News Service said, reports AFP.

"With the Cold War over, the United States and Soviet Union (Russia) have become the best of friends," Muro was quoted as saying. "And it seems to me that Japan is sometimes made out to be like common enemy of theirs."

He made the remarks to an audience of Foreign Ministry officials in an address commemorating the founding of the ministry, the news agency said. Muro said that due to Japan's rise to the status of an economic power, it had already been placed in a position of being subject to demands for funds, Kyodo said.



HONOLULU: Chelsea Clinton (R) hangs onto the back of President Bill Clinton as they take a swim on Sunday at the beach behind their hotel. Clinton family is spending three days together in Hawaii after President and Mrs Clinton's trip to Japan and Korea.

Report of Deng's operation groundless: China

BEIJING, July 13: China denied as "Totally groundless" today a report that paramount leader Deng Xiaoping had undergone surgery for testicular cancer, reports AFP.

"This report is totally groundless," a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

The Japanese newspaper, Yomiuri Shimbun, reported on Thursday that Deng, who will be 89 next month, was receiving treatment at home following an operation last month in a Beijing hospital.

Off the Record

She is no longer Spencer

LONDON: Princess Diana has disowned her widowed stepmother Countess Raine Spencer, who married a French aristocrat last week, Britain's tabloid newspapers said on Monday, reports Reuter.

Press reports from Zimbabwe, where the Princess is on a four-day visit, revelled in details of the final rift between Diana and the woman she dubbed 'acid Raine'.



"Now Raine has remarried. The Princess has made it clear that she wants her referred to as her ex-stepmother," newspaper quoted and aide as saying. "As far as she is concerned she is no longer Countess Spencer. That period is now over and she is glad to see the back of her," it added.

Newspapers headlined details of the Princess and her sister, Lady Sarah McCorquodale, laughing about press reports which mocked Raine's flamboyant wedding to Comptre Jean Francois Du Chambun.

The Princess was very amused by a reference to Raine which read: 'To call her a dog's diner would be to provoke widespread outrage among canine nutritionists,' the Daily Express said.

Diana and her brother and sisters did not attend the wedding of their 63-year-old, former stepmother, who married for the third time in a Central London registry office.

Raine's second husband, Earl Spencer - Diana's father - died last year.

The Princess, wife of heir-to-the throne Prince Charles, always had a frosty relationship with Raine.



AUSSIE BEAUTY IN FULL BLOOM: A pair of models parade the beach in Sidney recently.

Male, female brains react differently

SYDNEY: Tests on mice have found that male and female brains react differently to stress at the most basic chemical level. Australian researchers said yesterday, reports Reuter.

Brain activity increased in male mice, while females under stress remained calm and focused, the study found.

If the differences hold true in humans, some drugs may have to be tailored for each sex, they said.

"We're looking at it to see if we can develop improved drugs out of it," University of Sydney Professor Graham Johnston said.

Tests on mice at the university found receptors for the protein glutamate, which heightens activity, rose some 25 per cent in the brains of males when under stress.

The study also showed receptors for the calming agent gaba (Gamma-aminobutyric acid) were unchanged in males.

But in females, receptors for glutamate were unaltered and those for gaba more than doubled after only three minutes, allowing them to stay cool, Johnston said.

"It's an incredible change," he said. "We never thought you could get such big changes in such a short period of time."

Khmer Rouge to join Cambodian army

PHNOM PENH, July 13: Khmer Rouge leader Khieu Samphan returned to Phnom Penh today and agreed to put his guerrilla fighters into a unified Cambodian army, reports Reuter.

"We have proposed to establish a quadripartite army so as to avoid clashes and confrontations on the military field," he told reporters after meeting UN peacekeepers.

The three other Cambodian factions had already agreed to unify their fighting forces. Khieu Samphan and other Khmer Rouge leaders, who

ruled Cambodia at a cost of one million lives from 1975 to 1979, left Phnom Penh in April, citing fears for their safety.

They boycotted UN sponsored elections in May that resulted in formation of an interim coalition government.

An earlier report says, Khieu Samphan, returned to Phnom Penh for talks on what role the Maoist guerrilla faction might play in the future of Cambodia.

49 journalists killed or missing in '92

PANAMA CITY, July 13: Forty-nine journalists were killed or reported missing throughout the world in 1992, the Commission for the Protection of Journalists said here yesterday, reports Xinhua.

The Commission's annual report numbered 1,625 attacks made against journalists and the media in the world in 1992 and noted that 90 journalists remained incarcerated at the end of the year.

Zero cholesterol no danger for people with heart problems

JOHANNESBURG, July 13: Jan Crafford popped a locust into his mouth and extolled the virtue of the insect lightly fried in olive oil with just a hint of crushed garlic, reports Reuter. "The fats in insects are polyunsaturated," he said. "Zero cholesterol, no danger for people with heart problems."

Across the crowded room, Marcus Byrne made a dive for the last of the toasted delicacies. The occasion was a cocktail party for delegates to a meeting of the South African Entomological Society. The snacks, appropriately, were four kinds of insects. Latecomers missed out on the apparently irresistible stinkbugs and termites, but only small dents were made in the piles of locusts and mopani worms.

"Just pop the heads off like this," an insect expert explained, expertly decapitating a mopani worm before placing it in his mouth. "With the locusts, you just eat the abdomen. The wings and thorax are a bit tough and get stuck in your teeth." As the evening wore on, and with regular cleansing of the palate with beer, the mopani worms

took on the addictive properties of peanuts. Especially after being dipped in sour cream. Unfortunately the locust bellies tasted like locust bellies throughout the evening. "The bigger locusts are better," Byrne said. But they seem to have all been eaten. My favourite way of cooking them is with garlic butter and peri sauce." Byrne, mastermind behind the bug banquet, said the serious message was to educate people on the importance of insects.

"They are competitors for our food, they pollinate crops, they carry disease, and they are themselves an important food source." His only fear was that some of the cocktail snacks might have been collected after succumbing to pesticide sprays. "If half the guests here tonight collapse when they get home, I'll be in real trouble." Mopani worms, which mutate into emperor moths if not fried first, are widely eaten by Africa's peasant communities, usually after being dried. "Stinkbugs are a delicacy in Natal," said Crafford.

S African unrest: 670 killed in 70 days

JOHANNESBURG, July 13: Some 670 people have died in 70 days of unrest in South Africa's black townships, police said Monday, reports AFP.

Most of the victims died in Tlokoeng, Kaitleng and Vosloorus black townships south of Johannesburg, according to a police statement.

Fighting in Thokoza and neighbouring Kaitleng alone has claimed the lives of 107 people since July 2 alone, when democracy negotiators set April 27 as the date for South Africa's first non-racial election.

The carnage erupted between local residents, supporters of the ANC and hostel dwellers who back the IFP.