Flash flood claims 139 lives in India

CHANDIGARII, July 13: Torrential monsoon rains triggered flash flooding in parts of India, killing 139 people, cutting off roads, trapping hundreds of tourists and crippling communications, officials said Monday, reports AFP.

The army stepped up relief and rescue efforts Monday in the northern state of Punjab, where the heaviest rain in two decades left 16 people dead on the week-end, and flooded two thirds of Patiala city and some 1,100 villages.

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, officials said in the state capital Chandigarh.

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

"The situation is very bad, Patiala administrator T C Gupta

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

In the neighbouring hill state

of Himachal Pradesh, rain cut mountain highways, straining 500 tourists in the Lahaul valley, 82 of them foreigners, press reports said.

Efforts to clear roads to evacuate them to safety were hampered by heavy rain and snow, The Press Trust of India (PTI) said.

Himachal Pradesh's chick civil servant Attar Singh was quoted as saying the tourists were 34 expected to be rescued by late Monday.

blocked for a third day by landslides along with several other roads, and flights to the popular Himachal summer resort of Kulu were cancelled.

in Himachal, 45 in the western coastal state of Gujarat, 18 in northern Uttar Pradesh and two in Rajasthan.

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

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

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 UNbacked US attack in Somalia but said that more such attacks may be necessary, reports AFP.

"We regret any loss of life in connection with this mission," said State Department spokesman Michael McCurry, noting that the two journalists

killed and two others missing and feared dead since the attack had not been harmed by UN troops.

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

McCurry also stressed that the highest death toll in the attack, 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

"It was designed to continue



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. -UNB/AFP photo

US floods force 50,000 to evacuate

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 Hansi 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 were 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.

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 exstepmother," newspaper quoted and aide as saying, s

"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 Compte Jean Francois Du Chambrun. 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

The Princess, wife of heir-to-the throne Prince Charles,



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

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

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 unchanged 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 guerilla fighters into a unifled Cambodian army, reports

"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.

factions had already agreed to unify their fighting forces.

Khmer Rouge leaders, who

The three other Cambodian

Khieu Samphan and other

million lives from 1975 to 1979. left Phnom Penh in April, citing fears for their safety. They boycotted UN sponsored elections in May that re-

ruled Cambodia at a cost of one

sulted in formation of an interim coalition government. An earlier report says, Khieu Samphan, returned to Phnom Penh for talks on what role the

Maoist guerilla faction might play in the future of Cambodia. Within minutes of his arrival aboard a commercial flight he

was due to meet Prince Norodom Ranariddh. S African unrest:

670 killed in

70 days

Some 670 people have died in

70 days of unrest in South

Africa's black townships, police

Most of the victims died in

Tinderbox Natal Province and

Thokoza, Katlehong and

Vosloorus black townships

south of Johannesburg, accord-

Fighting in Thokoza and

ing to a police statement.

said Monday, reports AFP.

JOHANNESBURG, July 13:

BUILTIN

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. The President will hold talks on bilateral and other matters with leaders of the four countries, officials said.

Sharma, who is going abroad for the first time since becoming President last year, will have a 90-minute stop at Teheran on his way to Kiev, during which he will meet Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. He will be in Ukraine until July 16, then Ankara, arriving in Budapest on July 19 from Istanbul and London on July 22. Sharma returns on July 26 after an overnight stop at Athens.

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, Reuter reports from Amman. Officials said Ross drove straight to the palace for talks with

Crown Prince Hassan, acting as regent while King Hussein is on a private visit to London, and other senior officials He held extensive talks in Damascus with Syrian President

Halez Al-Assad after meeting Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al-Shara on Sunday in an effort to break the deadlock in the 20month-old US-sponsored 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, Reuter reports from Islamabad.

A police spokesman said the blast in the town in Punjab province appeared to be a case of sabotage but no-one had claimed responsibility for the crude home-made device. Gujranwala is 65 km (40 miles) north of the provincial capi-

tal of Lahore, where opposition parties decided on Sunday to lead a big march on the national capital Islamabad on Friday to try to topple Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

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

said Monday, AFP reports from Jakarta. Taher told journalists after meeting Indonesian President Suharto that 394 of the 122,886 Indonesian pilgrims this year had died in Saudi Arabia

He did not elaborate but Indonesian officials have said that

the causes of death among the pilgrims were mostly because of old age, heart disease, and heart stroke. Highest Kuwaiti award for Powell:

Kuwait on Monday awarded one of its highest honours, The Dhil Wishah Medal, to the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell for his role in liberating the Emirate, state radio said, AFP reports from Kuwait City. The general was a key figure in the US-led allied campaign

which drove Iraq out of Kuwait in the Gulf War of January-February 1991 He received the medal from the Emir, Sheikh Jaber Al-

Ahmad Al-Sabah, as he began his first visit to Kuwait since the Gulf War Powell also held talks with the Kuwaiti Chief of Staff General Alt Al-Moamen on the situation in the Gulf, notably along the

Kuwaiti-Iraqi border, and was to meet with the Defence Minister Sheikh Ali Al-Salem Al-Sabah, state radio reported. 32 die in China flood: Death toll in flooding caused by torrential rain in the southern Chinese

province of Guanget rose to 32 with at least 100 people injured. a report said on Tuesday according to AFP from Hong Kong. The Guanget relief office was quoted by the China News Service (CNS) as saying that five days of torrential rain ending July 9 in Hechi region had caused widespread flooding, with

damage estimated at 100 million yuan (17 million US dollar). Last week, China's Civil Affairs Ministry said flood waters in the eastern province of Jiangxi and neighbouring Hunan left 81 people dead and 1,156 injured between July 1 and July 4.

rampage over a large area of the middle west, reports Reuter. The floods along the

Mississippi and its watershed area have so far caused over dollar 2 billion in damage to crops, businesses and homes since they began over two weeks ago, raising fears that they could play havoc with the US economy Meanwhile, a heat wave on

ST LOUIS, July 13: Floods

50,000 people from Des Moines,

Iowa, on Monday as a swollen

Mississippi river continued its

the US east coast Appsared to be abating with temperatures retreating slightly from record highest last week.

The Mississippi spilled over a floodwall into an area south of

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 along-

side separatists, a western

diplomat said Monday, reports

battalion in southern Abkhazia

the diplomat said.

Georgia would leave just one

Georgian and Abkhazian of-

ficials agreed at talks in Moscow

Monday on arrangements for

the withdrawal of troops from

forced the evacuation of up to 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.

St. Louis forcing evacuations

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

Georgia, Abkhazia fail to

agree on ceasefire

the troubled Black Sea region,

fire, Russian Deputy Foreign

also the involvement of Russian

observers in an international

observer mission in the region,

despite earlier claims by

Georgian officials that Russian

troops were backing the sepa-

ratists in their 11-month-old

Interfax News Agency, said the

talks were stalled over the

Abkhazian insistence on

Pastukhov, quoted by

independence struggle.

The Tbilisi authorities might

but failed to agree on a cease-

Minister Boris Pastukhov said.

The flood waters continued to cripple Des Moines, where the Des Moines and Raccoon

being out off on Monday night.

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 electric-

lowa 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,

restoring their institutions in

Sukhumi after the departure of

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

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.

Shevardnadze returned to

At least 1,000 people have

Georgian forces.

were pressed in to service doling out water to long queues of people. The US Department of

even lifeguards from local pools,

Defence said it will supply 40 emergency water purification systems for the area. Some official have estimated that it might take up to a month before ordinary tap water will be safe to drink in lowa's biggest city. Midewest 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.

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

TOKYO, July 13: Foreign Minister Kabun Muto 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," Muto 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 of ficials in an address commemorating the founding of the ministry, the news agency said.

Muto 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.

Report of Deng's operation groundless: China

BEIJING, July 13: China denied as "Totally groundless" today a report that paramount leader Deng Xiaoping had un-

dergone surgery for testicular

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

cancer, reports AFP.

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.

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. -AFP photo

Zero cholesterol no danger for people with heart problems make wonderful homes for flies. "The chemical which gives them their name is

JOHANNESBURG, July 13: Jan Crafford popped a locust into his mouth and extolled the virtus 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 termites

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

stuck in your teeth." As the evening wore on, and with regular cleansing of the palate with beer, the mopani worms

wings and thorax are a bit tough and get

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

"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

snacks might have been collected after succumbing to pesticide sprays.

being dried. "Stinkbugs are a delicacy in Natal," said Crafford.

quite harmless and actually tastes like corian-Some black communities obtain 80 per cent of their protein from insects.

Crafford is researching the role of insects in the diet and folk lore of the Venda tribe in Northern South Africa. "It's pity there's a psychological resistance to

eating insects," said Crafford, who is gathering material for a South African gourmet insect cook book. "In fact they're closely related to prawns and crayfish." His favourite insect dish is mopani worms with

tomato and onion sauce. "Why, I specialise in cow and horse dung," said Karin Camerik, a Dutch mite expert, her face

The mites she studies - most of them invisible to the naked eye - breed furiously in cow pats. "Cow pats are a much more favourable habitat than horse dung, because they form a crust which retains moisture inside. Horse dung dries too quickly."

Australia has learned the hard way that cow pats

None of Australia's indigenous bugs evolved to

cope with either cqw pats or flies, with the result that Australians have to dangle corks from their hat brims to keep the fly plague out of their faces.

Entomologists have come to the rescue, exporting heavy duty African dung beetles to Australia to break up the cow pats. Camerik herself is trying to unlock the secrets of

the cow dung mite life cycle so these tiny creatures, which parasitise fly eggs, can be unleashed in Australia. "We cant get the mites to reproduce in the

Laboratory," she complained. A key step in mite sexuality is development of a giant hook on its face which it digs into a fly

so it can hitch a ride from one life-giving island of dung to another. According to Crafford, dung beetles and flies are not among the insects one would want to eat. "There are only five kinds of insects that are

" be actually toxic, but they taste awful."

neighbouring Katlehong 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 be-

tween local residents, supporters of the ANC and hostel widely eaten," he said. "The others might not dwellers who back the IFP.

killed or

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

republics of the former Soviet Union and Europe have replaced Latin American as the most dangerous places for news people. It attributed this to the loss of power of many authoritarian governments in the re-

49 journalists missing in '92 PANAMA CITY, July 13

Forty-nine journalists were killed or reported missing throughout the world in 1992. the Commission for the

end of the year. According to the report, the

The India-Tibet highway was

Forty-seven people have died

abandon their flooded homes.