-Star TV photo

Russia to reopen talks on rocket deal soon

NEW DELHI, July 29: A Russian team will visit India to reopen talks on a rocket engine deal. Moscow froze following pressure from the United States, Prime Minister P.V Narasimha Rao said Wednesday, reports AFP.

"We will have to discuss the whole matter and a team is coming soon from Russia," Rao told Parliament of the spiked

NZ condemns Israeli attack on Lebanon

WELLINGTON, July 29: Prime Minister Jim Bolger condemned Israeli attacks on south Lebanon as a "disproportionate" response to Hizbollah attempts to end the Middle East Peace process, reports AFP.

Attacks on civilians, by etther side, create immediate humanitarian problems, Bolger said in a statement.

*All involved must exercise restraint to avoid further escalation. There is no advantage to anyone in a continuation of the present conflict."

Wednesday, AP reports from Agri.

tain had infiltrated from Iran.

gers, after a 10 1/2-hour flight

Beijing shortly afterwards.

Portuguese and Spanish.

shooting last Friday

United Nations

Israel Wednesday, AP reports from Tel Aviv.

San Martino, Liechtenstein and Monaco.

attack, AP reports from Rio De Janetro.

Thursday, AP reports from San Jose

Wednesday, AP reports from Florida

side a fire bomb, which exploded," she said.

and was caught in the flammable material.

Wednesday at a hospital, she said

three weeks ago is insufficient.

February

Hospitals treated emergency cases only

the clashes.

350 million dollar deal for the sale of two Cryogenic engines and rocket technology to India's space industry.

The Prime Minister denied that Moscow reneged on the controversial transfer of rocket technology saying special circumstances had compelled Moscow not to " fulfil further reports Reuter. obligations".

The United States earlier this month opposed the technology transfer to India and pressured Russia to suspend the deal

"We have a whole gamut of relations with the Russians. and this is a sensitive situation," Rao said in reply to questions on the effects of the suspension on India's fledgling space programme.

Rao, angered by the Russian U-Turn, had earlier accused Moscow of buckling under the U.S threat, adding that Washington's opposition to the rocket deal was purely commer-

He also called upon the Indian scientific community to develop its own rocket technology in order to become self-re-

13 more Kurds killed in Turkey:

Turkish troops killed at least 13 separatist Kurdish guerillas on

a mountain bordering Iran, the Anatolia news agency said on

higher, quoting provincial governor Ismet Metin as saying cap-

tured guerillas reported that about 100 insurgents had died in

erating on the Tendurek mountain on the Iranian border since

But the agency said guerilla casualties could be much

Security forces, supported by jets and helicopters, were op-

The agency earlier reported that the guerillas on the moun-

Air China starts flights to Israel:

China's national airline, Air China, inaugurated direct flights to

Ben Gurion International Airport near Tel Aviv with 27 passen-

An Air China 747 jet from Beijing landed in the afternoon at

At a welcoming ceremony, Air China's president, Xu Bailing,

Israel's Transport Minister Yisrael Kessar said, "This is an

Israel and China established diplomatic ties in January

1992. Israel's national airlines, El Al, began weekly flights to

Andorra enters UN: The General Assembly

on Wednesday unanimously welcomed Andorra, a tiny

European nation located between France and Spain in the

Pyrenees mountains, as its 184th member, AP reports from

Andorra will be one of the smallest UN members, along with

Andorra has a population of about 56,000 and an area of

180 square miles (467 square kilometers). Slightly more than a

quarter of the population is Andorra. The rest are French.

8th victim of Rio massacre dies:

The leader of a gang of a street kids has died from wounds suffered when gunmen shot on a group of sleeping youths in

the shadow of the Candeleria Cathedral, the eighth victim of the

in Portuguese, died Tuesday at Souza Aguiar Hospital, hospital

officials said Wednesday. He had been in a coma since the

gunmen. They have been detained for questioning. Nilo Batista,

the Secretary of Justice of Rio de Janeiro state, said two more

Strike for higher wages: some

80,000 public employees struck for higher wages Wednesday

They were to be joined by as may as 55,000 teachers on

Most government offices were at least partially closed

The strike was called by the Permanent Workers' Council,

President Rafael Angel Calderon accused strike leader of po-

which claims the 5 per cent raise received by public employees

litical motives. Presidential elections are scheduled for

Fire bomb kills one in Florida:

Someone threw a fire bomb into a grocery store, burring one

person to death and injuring four others, police said

Police have no suspect or motive for the attack at the B and

The bombing occurred Tuesday night with three customers

" A man simply opened the door to the market and threw in-

Customer James Smith, 47, instinctively dropped to the floor

He was burned over 80 per cent of his body and died

and the store's two owners inside, said police spokeswoman

state policemen would be detained soon as suspects.

Marco Antonia da Silva, 20 - known as "Ruco," or "Blondie"

Survivors said three state policemen were among the five

historic moment for us." He expressed hope for closer ties with

said he hoped that the planned weekly charter flights would

help develop further cultural exchanges between the two coun-

Kabul warns of retaliation against Russian aggression

KABUL, July 29: Afghanistan demanded on Wednesday that Russia withdraw its forces along the border with Tajikistan and warned that it would respond to any more attack,

The Afghan government emphasises that Russian troops should be removed from our border as soon as possible," the Foreign Ministry said, issuing a resolution taken at an emergency cabinet meeting on Tuesday.

It called on the United Nations and the Organisation of Islamic Conference to put pressure on Moscow to pull its troops back from the Tajik bor-

Moscow has said Kabul is backing cross-border attacks by Tajik rebels who fled into Afghanistan after their defeat in a civil war last year.

Kabul was ready for talks with the Russian federation to end the spate of cross-border attacks this month that have evoked memories on both sides

of the 10-year Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan, of ficials said.

" We are willing to send a delegation to a meeting in Dushanbe," Deputy Foreign Minister Hamid Karzai said in an interview.

" Afganistan is not interested in interfering in the internal affairs of Tatikistan, but will not tolerate any aggression on the border and if the aggression continues Afghanistan will have to react," the Foreign Ministry

In Moscow, the ITAR Tass news agency said Russian and Tajik force unleashed "a massive artiflery and mortar strike" across the border into Afgha-The bombardment was part

of a major air and ground operation launched in Tajikistan last Sunday to destroy a force of Afghan-backed Tajik rebels, it

It coincided with a political initiative by Russian President Boris Yeltsin to solve the Tailk-

Afghan border crisis, in which he has appointed Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev was his special representative in Taji-

Yeltsin gave Kozyrev the primary task of establishing dialogue between the Tajik government and rebels, a state ment issued by Yeltsin's office

on Wednesday said. The Afghan Foreign Ministry said it was ready to mediate between the Tajik government and the rebels.

" We do not want Russia to repeat the mistake of occupying

Afghanistan," it said. Yeltsin's attempts to promote negotiation seemed to be a response to fears of many Russians who, remembering their country's disastrous 10year military adventure in Afghanistan, fear being dragged into another losing war in the-

Tass quoted military sources as saying the army sweep was initiated after up to 400 heavily armed rebels, including Afghan

Mujahideen guerillas, crossed the Pyanj river marking the border and massed near the village of Vari.

Tass said rebel reinforcements had tried to cross the frontier near border post 11 to help their comrades.

AFP adds: Russian President Boris Yeltsin's claim that the Afghan-Tajik border was also 'a Russian frontier" was vigorously rejected by a senior Defence Ministry official in Kabul today.

"Tajikistan is an independent country and it has its own borders. Under no circumstances are these borders Russian borders," said General Yunus Qanooni, political chief and spokesman of the Defence

Yeltsin, who made the border claims at last Monday's Russian security council meeting, was quoted as saying everyone must understand that this frontier is also a Russian frontier not just a Tajik one."

"There is no logic to Yeltsin's claim", Qanooni said.

Lebanon stop rocketing north-

More than 80 Lebanese have

been killed and hundreds

wounded as Israel has sought

to force the civilian population

northwars to apply pressure on

the Lebanese and Syrian gov-

ernments to halt Hezbollah

Israel launched the opera-

tion Sunday with a devastating

air assault backed up by heavy

artillery barrages against the

Islamic fundamentalists and

radical Palestinian bases. Meanwhile, a Palestinian

leader warned Thursday of in-

creased retaliation against lsr-

aeli attacks in south Lebanon,

which have caused more than

150,000 civilians to flee the

" Palestinians can do a lot to

rocket attacks.

male heirs BEIJING: A Chinese farmer was arrested for running a baby factory out of his home by forcing his wife and three teenage

Baby factory to breed

the TV soap Santa Barbara.

daughters to bear sons for paying-clients, the Information Daily reported Wednesday, says AFP. Police raided the home in March and discovered that the

Sophia (L), a former Mrs Capwell and Gina, the present wife

of CC Capwell fight like a couple of cats on a hot tin roof in

Off the Record

racket began seven years ago.

The four women gave birth to a total of 17 babies, including 12 boys, and earned tens of thousands of dollars, the report

The youngest daughter, just 14, was forced to have sex with a 60-year-old man, who paid 10,000 yuan (about 1,750 US dollar on the floating exchange rate, in hopes of having a male

The farmer, identified only by his last name Qin, lived in the remote hills on the border of Hebei and Shanxi provinces, with no other families around for 15 kilometres (10 miles).

The business started after Qin brought home a stranger, named Hou, who was kicked out of his home by his wife's parents for failing to have a son.

Hou convinced Qin to let him have sex with his 35-year-old wife for a month and pay them 4,000 yuan if she gave birth to a boy, which she did.

Fergie's hope of salvaging image blocked

LONDON: The Duchess of York's hopes of salvaging her public image by becoming a special UN envoy have been blocked by the British government and Buckingham Palace, newspapers reported Wednesday, says AP.

A lawmaker said he would press the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) to find someone — "anybody else" to fill the job.

"I was appalled by the original announcement that she might be given this job." said Sir Nicholas Fairbairn of the governing Conservative Party. "I cannot think of any-

body else I would sooner not appoint to this post than the Duchess of York," he said.

duchess, better know as Fergie, was announced June 10 when she accepted a humanitarian award in London

on behalf of the UN High has vet to be confirmed.

Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata.

fear appointing the ebullient, indiscreet Fergie as goodwill ambassador "could turn into an embarrassing disaster."

US senate bars aid

BEIRUT: Supporters of the Iranian-backed Hezbullah demonstrate through the streets Thursday against the four-day Israeli bombardments in South Lebanon The placard shows a caricature of US Secretary of State Warren Christopher with a Star of David on his fore - UNB/AFP photo

Arafat demands UN session to discuss Lebanon issue KUALA LUMPUR, July 29: Hezbollah and other Palestinian guerillas based in southern

Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) chief Yasser Arafat demanded here today an emergency session of the UN Security Council to discuss Israel's bombardment of Lebanon, reports AFP.

The situation is serious and the UN Security Council must sit immediately to discuss the issue," a senior PLO spokesman quoted Arafat as saying during a special meeting here with diplomats representing 19 Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) member countries.

Hani Al-Hassan, political adviser to Arafat who is on a visit to Kuala Lumpur, told reporters the PLO had contacted UN Security Council permanent members France, Britain, China and Russia to help " stop the carnage" in southern Lebanon. " Apart from them, we are in

contact with the Lebanese government and all other Arab countries and ANM to put a stop to [Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhakl Rabin's bloody campaign," said Hani.

Arafat on Wednesday contacted President Suharto of Indonesia, which is leading NAM, to also help lebby for the Security Council session," he

Rabin vowed on Wednesday to continue " mercilessly" the bombardment until pro-Iranian

confront Israeli military forces attacking south Lebanon," said Hant Al-Hassan, a central committee member of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). " The PLO's popular uprising

against Israel can be escalated in many ways," he told reporters. Hassan is in Malaysia with

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, who arrived on Wednesday. Arafat will go on to Vietnam on Friday for a three-day visit, government officials in Hanoi

The new job for the Seven weeks later, newspapers reported, her appointment

The Daily Mail said the government and Buckingham Palace

US to provide air power to protect UN troops in Bosnia

WASHINGTON, July 29 Edging closer to military intervention in Bosnia. President Clinton declared Wednesday he was ready to provide air power quickly to protect peacekeepers once he receives a request from the UN, reports AP.

"We are prepared to fulfill our commitment," Clinton told a news conference before meeting with Secretary of State Warren Christopher on the fighting in the former Yugoslav republic and in the Mideast.

Such a request appeared

In New York, UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said NATO warplanes should be ready to mount air strikes in support of the peacekeepers early next week. He said that any air strikes

would be "limited to the place which has violated the rules of the United Nations "Asked when the air cover would begin Boutros-Ghali said "Monday. Tuesday.

Clinton said he was prepared

to commit US airpower in response to new Serbian assaults on the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo and attacks on French peacekeepers. The French government

asked the United Nations and NATO to speed up plans to provide air cover for UN ground forces in Bosnia. Its peacekeepers were caught in the line of fire twice this week during Serb artillery bombardment.

"If the request comes we certainly can be prepared," the president said. "NATO can be prepared in a very brief time

On a cautionary pote, senior military officials said that war planes to be used in the operation lack some critical equipment to carry out precision strikes against weapons that threaten them.

Some 60 jet fighters from the United States, France, Great Britain and the Netherlands are poised at air bases in Italy. But to conduct pinpoint air

to-ground strikes, the NATO aircraft need troops on the ground to "spot" targets for them. Those troops must be equipped with laser target designators, radios and other communications equipment to coordinate the attacks with the pilots, the military officials said. They commented only on condition of anonymity.

Should the United Nations make a formal request, the warplanes would fly in support of a Security Council resolution that authorizes protection for a force of some 7,500 peacekeepers near Sarajevo and five other mostly Muslim regions. Officials say the planes also could be used to protect 9,000 peace-

For months. Clinton has been frustrated by the refusal of European allies to back a plan that includes the prospect of Western air strikes against Serb targets in Bosnia and the lifting of a UN arms embarge to help Muslim troop.

keepers elsewhere in Bosnia.

troops land in Mogadishu

200 German

MOGADISHU, July 29: About 200 German soldiers landed in Somalia's embattled capital today as sniper attacks kept the heat on United Nations peacekeepers, reports AFP. The German soldiers are op-

erating under stricter rules than troops from the other 26 nations in the more than 20,000-strong UN force in Somalia. The Germans may return fire

in self-defence, but are barred from offensive 'peacemaking' operations against Somali militiamen under their country's post-war constitution. They are the first German

soldiers to carry arms outside North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) countries since World War II. They will be deployed in the relatively peaceful Western town of Beletuen.

The new arrivals join 250 German soldiers who arrived last week, and an advance party of about another 260 in Somalia since may to prepare the ground for their comrades.

to Nicaragua WASHINGTON, July 29: The terrorism.

Senate voted Wednesday to stop all US aid to Nicaragua as conservatives pointed to what they called links between terrorists and that nation's leftist Sandinista faction, reports AP. The measure, opposed by the

Clinton administration, now goes to the House.

The administration has expressed concern over the reported links between terrorists and the Sandinistas, Nicaragua's former ruling party. But it has urged continued aid to moderate President Violeta Chamorro.

Congress shut off aid to Nicaragua last year in a similar move. But the State Department released dlrs 54 million in December and the other dlrs 50 million in April after citing progress in the nation's human rights record.

The current legislation, au thored by Sen. Jesse Helms, a conservative Republican, bars aid to the Managua government until President Clinton confirms that no senior Nicaraguan offi-

cial is engaged in international

The Senate also defeated an attempt to kill dirs 35 million in spending for the National Endowment for Democracy, a bipartisan group that promotes democracy abroad. Last week, the house eliminated all funding for the endowment.

Both the Nicaragua action passed 77-23, and the attempt to kill WED, defeated 74-23, were offered as amendments to a spending bill still under consideration.

Helms' amendment followed the May discovery of an arms cache in Managua that indicated the existence of an international terrorist operation.

The arms cache, linked by Helms and others to the leftist Sandinista faction, contained 19 surface-to-air missiles and documents detailing a Marxist kidnapping ring.

The State Department is currently considering dlrs 100,000 in military training assistance for Nicaragua but has not set a figure for economic assistance.

Luanda, July 29: Angolan government forces have recaptured the town of Cubal, west of the UNITA rebel stronghold of Huambo, the army said, reports

An army statement on Wednesday said government troops inflicted heavy losses on UNITA (National Union for the Total independence of Angola) during the attack on Cubal on Tuesday.

News of town's recapture came as Angolan chief-of-staff General Joso De Matos told reporters in the eastern city of Lucna that the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Aingolal government expected to regain the initiative on several fronts in the next few days. He gave no details.

E European arms traders desperately seeking new markets spell disaster for east European

VIENNA, July 29: East European arms manufacturers. thrown into crists by the collapse of communism, are desperately seeking new markets to avoid closing factories which used to provide the military hardware for Moscow's Cold War allies, reports AFP.

Since communist governments fell one after another in Eastern Europe in 1989 more than 100,000 people employed in arms industries in Slovakia. Poland, Bulgaria and Romania have been made redundant.

The end of the Warsaw Pact. the general reduction in defence expenditure, the breakup of the former Soviet Union- which used to be a major arms market - and UN embargoes on Iraq and Libya have combined to

arms manufacturers.

Since 1989 Slovakia's revenue from arms sales has plunged from 690 million dollar to 50 million at the end of last

Arms production has halved in Poland, while Bulgaria which used to export up to 800 million dollar worth of arms each year under communism has seen its weapons factories reduced to one-third capacity.

The crisis has been even more dramatic in Romania. The Balkan nation, which once boasted a flourishing indige nous arms industry, has been . its weapons production fall by 95 per cent compared with 1985, and it has virtually stopped exporting military equi-

Hungary has cut arms production by 90 per cent.

The unemployment figures in eastern Europe's arms in dustries make alarming read ing 60000 in Peland, 42,000 in Slovakia, 25,000 in Bulgaria and about 12,000 in Romania. The future continues to look

Romanian Defence Minister Nicolae Spiroiu has said 60,000 more jobs are threatened in Romania's military production sector, and a report by a Bulgarian parliamentary commission released in June said new markets had to be found

urgently to prevent more re

dundancies among the 100,000

employees in the country's mili-

tary industries. There are two options for East European arms manufac-

turers faced with collapsing sales: find new markets, or convert from military to civilian production.

costly, and is no guarantee of new markets. The Czech republic has gone for the first option.

In June, 12 Czech enterprises, prompted by the Skoda Pizen Engineering Group, former a new company called RDP Group, specialising in making military hardware.

The company plans to play an active role in restructuring the Czech army. It will also produce a rapid-firing Howitzer and modernise Soviet T-72 tanks to compete with western arms manufactures in the world

The strategy has already got

off to a good start. RDP is drawing up plans to cooperate with the French company Sofma, The latter option is very

which specialises in arms exports and technology transfer. The deal is particularly aimed at modernisation of the T-72. 6,630 of which are currently serv ... mies worldwide.

Slovania, home to three-quarters of the former Czechoslovakia's military industries before the breakup of the federation, plans to convert 50 of its arms factories over the next five years to production of drilling equipment and agricultural machinery, instead of tanks and pistols. The cost of the conversion is put at 534

In Poland analysts have calculated that conversion of part of the country's arms factories

million dollar.

to civilian production would cost about one billion and would be impossible to finance out of the state budget.

In Bulgaria, which has traditionally shipped arms to the Middle East, the authorities have decided that military production is one of the few viable pillars of the battered economy. and are seeking new markets under communism Bulgaria exported 96 per cent of its military production.

Neighbouring Romania has effectively lost its traditional arms markets in Iraq and Libya, and is implementing a cash programme to convert some of its arms factories. One tank factory in Bucharest is now producing gas cookers and underground trains.

500 killed in S African violence this month DURBAN, July 29: More

than 5000 people have been killed in South Africa's black townships so far this month, the highest monthly toll in three years, the Human Rights Commission (HRC) said on Wednesday, reports Reuter. The HRC, a human rights

monitoring group linked to the

African National Congress, said

most of the violence took place in townships east of Johannesburg where at least 255 people have been killed since the July 2 announcement of an election date. Police have blamed many of

the deaths on feuding between the ANC and the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party.

Angolan troops recapture Cubal town